

BY
"Noname"

Jack Wright and His Electric Flying Machine ;
OR, A RECORD TRIP AROUND THE WORLD
NEXT WEEK!

JIM JUMP ;
Or, DOING A LITTLE
OF EVERYTHING.
NEXT WEEK!

BY
Tom Teaser

HAPPY DAYS

A PAPER FOR YOUNG AND OLD.



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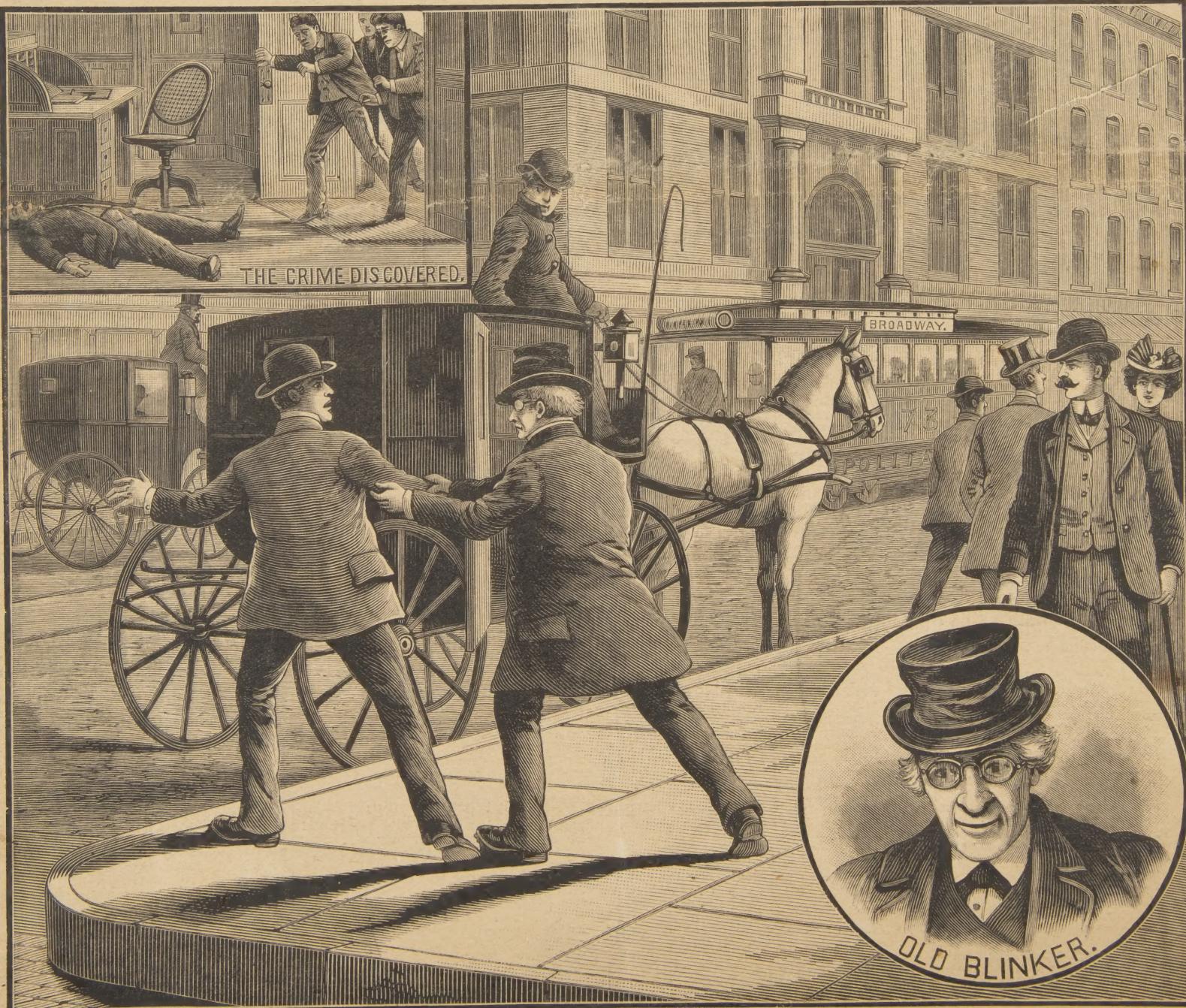
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No. 388

OLD BLINKER, THE DETECTIVE :

By OLD KING BRADY.

Or, The Ghouls of the
Grave Yard Gate.



Hector would have given chase to the flying coupe had not some one seized him by the arm and swung him violently around. "Let me go!" cried
Hector, struggling, and then he perceived that he was in the hands of Old Blinker, who had hold of him with an iron grip.

If We Only Understood.

Could we but draw back the curtains
That surround each other's lives,
See the naked heart and spirit,
Know what spur the action gives,
Often we should find it better,
Purer than we judge we should,
We should love each other better,
If we only understood.

Could we judge all deeds by motives,
See the good and bad within,
Often we would love the sinner
All the while we loathe the sin;
Could we know the powers working
To overthrow integrity,
We should judge each other's errors
With more patient charity.

If we knew the cares and trials,
Knew the efforts all in vain,
And the bitter disappointment,
Understood the loss and gain—
Would the grim, eternal roughness
Seem, I wonder, just the same?—
Should we help where now we hinder,
Should we pity where we blame?

Ah! we judge each other harshly,
Knowing not life's hidden force;
Knowing not the fount of action
Is less turbid at its source;
Seeing not amid the evil
All the golden grain of good;
And we'd love each other better,
If we only understood.

Old Blinker, the Detective

By OLD KING BRADY.

CHAPTER I.

THE SILENCE IN THE SANCTUM.

One morning, at a little before twelve o'clock, not many years ago, the three clerks in the employ of Whitmark & Zollman, the famous Maiden Lane diamond dealers and jewelers were thrown into a great state of excitement by the arrival of a package by express.

This was, as one might say, the first chapter of the "Big Blue Diamond" mystery which threw all New York into a fever of excitement for many days.

The package was brought upstairs—the offices of the firm were on the second floor—and thrown down on the green baize-covered counter in the usual way.

Young Herbert Howard received it for it and his twin brother, Hector, who was the bookkeeper, Herbert being the junior salesman, rang the electric bell in Mr. Diedrich Zollman's private office by pressing the button alongside his desk to let him know that the package had arrived, having been ordered so to do.

A moment later the door of the private office opened and Mr. Zollman, an elderly man, came out and walked in his slow way toward that part of the counter where the parcel lay.

Mr. Zollman was all of seventy years old and was reckoned fairly well-to-do.

He was a childless widower, in poor health, and a man of few words. Although one of the heaviest diamond dealers in New York, and a perfect expert in gems of all kinds, he never wore anything in the shape of jewelry himself. He was not popular in the trade, owing to his unsocial disposition and brusque manners, but he was liberal to his employees and generally respected by all who knew him.

Furthermore, Mr. Zollman was the sole active proprietor of the business, Mr. Whitmark having long been dead and the interests of his estate in the business being controlled by his executor, a lawyer named Martin Fox, who was scarcely known to the employees of the firm.

"So it has come, has it, Herbert?" remarked Mr. Zollman, taking up the package.

"Yes, sir," replied Herbert. "You see it bears the Amsterdam express label. It can contain nothing else than the big blue diamond, I suppose."

"Undoubtedly that is what it is. We will, however, proceed to open it and make sure," said the jeweler, in his heavy fashion.

He cut the cords and removed the many wrappings.

The package was rather a large one considering the nature of its contents.

Paper after paper was removed before Mr. Zollman came to a small, pasteboard box.

This in turn contained other papers, and finally another and smaller box turned up, which, being opened, contained something about as big round as the end of the thumb nail of a good-sized hand, wrapped in white tissuepaper and resting on a bed of cotton.

All the clerks crowded around as Mr. Zollman opened this final package and displayed a diamond of the purest water and a decided blue tinge.

It sparkled and glittered in the sunlight which came streaming in through the windows, and called forth a chorus of "Oh's!" and "Ah's!" from the clerks as they gazed

upon it, as well it might; for not only was it a beautiful stone, worth as much as \$50,000, but it was also a diamond with a history, having once belonged to the royal crown of France.

"Well, there it is; come at last!" said Mr. Zollman, turning it over in his hand.

Hector Howard then noticed that it had been slightly chipped on the edge of one of the facets, something which he knew must somewhat impair its worth.

"Why, it is chipped!" he exclaimed. "Did you know that, Mr. Zollman?"

"Of course I knew it," was the reply. "Do you suppose my Amsterdam agent would have deceived me? That is how I came to get it cheap."

"It will have to be re-cut, I suppose. I should have thought you would have had that done in Amsterdam, sir."

"Which shows, Hector, that you still have much to learn about this business," answered the jeweler. "Did I want to pay an extra thousand dollars duty on this diamond when it could be saved by having it re-cut here? Not at all. Mr. Van Slyk will attend to that matter for me. He learned his trade in Amsterdam, and is as expert as—ah, here is business! I'll explain some other time."

The door had opened and a young lady, elegantly dressed and evidently not more than twenty years of age, entered.

The clerks at once resumed their places, and Mr. Zollman arose, still holding the big blue diamond, while he turned to the visitor, saying:

"Ah, good morning, Miss Arundel! I am pleased to see you. What can we do for you this morning? You are just in time to have the opportunity of seeing something in the line of gems which I feel sure you never set eyes on before."

Hector Howard's eyes had left the big blue diamond now and were fixed upon the girl.

So were the eyes of his brother Herbert, and, in fact, the other clerks temporarily forgot the diamond, too, for the girl was not only very beautiful, but she was well known to them all as the only daughter of the multi-millionaire banker, Lester Arundel, one of the richest men in New York City.

Miss Arundel had a perfect passion for unset gems, and was always buying them and having them set up in some peculiar way.

As her father honored all bills presented, without question, she was regarded as one of the best customers of the firm.

"Good morning, Mr. Zollman," she replied. "I want to look over your rubies and emeralds—large ones, please. What is it you have to show me that I have never seen before? You know how I love precious stones. If you have anything really unique you will find me ready to buy."

"What do you think of that?" asked Mr. Zollman, proudly, and he opened his hand and displayed the big blue diamond in the palm.

"Oh! Oh! A big sapphire! What a beauty!" the girl exclaimed.

"No, no; it is no sapphire. It is a blue diamond," replied Mr. Zollman. "It is not as big as the famous Hope Diamond, of course, but it is of just as fine quality. I have just imported it and—but come into my private office, Miss Arundel, and I will tell you all about it. Herbert, bring in the three trays which contain the larger rubies and emeralds and sapphires."

"But I don't wish any sapphires," exclaimed Miss Arundel. "It is only rubies and emeralds that I am looking for this morning."

"Certainly. I understood you," replied the jeweler. "I want to show you the difference between a blue diamond and a sapphire, that is all. Bring all three in, Herbert, and then go and tell Mr. Van Slyk that I want to see him. Tell him to come around the front way, as I am engaged with Miss Arundel. This way, Miss, if you please!"

Thus saying, Mr. Zollman threw open the door of his private room and ushered Miss Arundel in, closing it behind him.

Herbert opened the safe, took out the three trays required, which contained unset rubies, emeralds and sapphires worth a small fortune in themselves; knocking on the door, for Mr. Zollman was very particular in that regard, he passed into the sanctum; and coming immediately out again, put on his hat and prepared to go for Mathias Van Slyk, the celebrated diamond cutter, whose workshop was in an old building on John Street, immediately in the rear.

"Pewh! Isn't she a stunner!" exclaimed Sam Meyer, the other clerk. "Don't I wish I had her dad's dough!"

"Why don't you wish Miss Arundel would fall in love with you?" laughed Herbert. "Then you would have the girl and the dough, too. You know you told me you were in love with her, the other day."

Hector looked up from his ledger and eyed his brother angrily. Herbert glanced at him, laughed and left the office, whistling a popular air.

Ten minutes passed and Herbert had not yet returned, when the door of the sanctum opened and Miss Arundel passed out, closing it behind her.

Without even glancing at the clerks she left the office, and Hector, whose desk was near the window, looking down into the

street, saw that she entered her carriage and was driven away.

"Looks as though she didn't buy anything this morning," remarked Sam Meyer.

"Evidently not," replied Hector. "She's hard to suit, anyway. Strange, Herbert don't come back."

Fifteen minutes more elapsed and not a sound was heard in the sanctum.

This, however, was nothing strange. Mr. Zollman passed most of his time in this room behind the closed door, and he never tolerated any interruption of his privacy.

If any one called whom it was necessary for him to see, Hector rang the electric bell. If he wished anything it was Herbert's duty to wait upon him and answer the call of the electric bell over Hector's desk, which was controlled by a button in the sanctum.

Five minutes more passed, and beyond feeling a bit perplexed about his brother's long absence, Hector gave the silence in the sanctum no thought.

Then the outer door opened and Herbert came in all breathless.

"Has Mr. Van Slyk come yet?" he exclaimed.

"No," replied Hector. "Did you see him?"

"Yes; he said he would be right around if I would run down to the custom house for him with a message, which I did."

"Then that accounts for you being gone so long," replied Hector. "I was wondering what the deuce was the matter. The boss hasn't rung his bell yet, although Miss Arundel has been gone this long time. Hello! There it goes now!"

The bell rang sharply over Hector's head as he spoke.

Herbert immediately answered it, closing the door of the sanctum behind him as was the rule.

Hector followed him with his eyes, and then resumed work on the books, little dreaming of the momentous events which were to follow his brother's disappearance in that room.

Mr. Zollman's voice could be heard behind the door, then Herbert's voice answering. Then a door slammed and there came a sharp cry:

"Help! Oh, help!"

Instantly following the cry was the sound of a heavy fall.

Then it was silence in the sanctum again—silence most profound!

CHAPTER II.

HERBERT HOWARD ACCUSED OF A TERRIBLE CRIME.

There never had been the least trouble at Whitmark & Zollman's since the day the first of the Howard twins was engaged.

That was Herbert. He had been with the firm since he was a boy of fourteen, and four years had passed since then.

Hector came later and had been with the firm only two years.

But little was known about the boys except that they were without either father or mother, and had come from a country town somewhere up New York State.

Both had been strictly attentive to business and were well thought of by those who knew them in the "Lane."

Their good standing was to be seriously shaken now, however, as will presently be seen.

The cry from the sanctum brought Hector from his desk with a rush, while Sam Meyer vaulted over the counter and joined him in the run for the door.

A startling sight met their gaze as they threw the door open.

Mr. Zollman lay stretched upon the floor in a pool of blood, dead, to all appearance, or if not that, dying, at least.

On the table at which he usually sat—he did not use a desk as it was often necessary to spread out gems before him and he preferred a table with a raised rim for that purpose—lay the trays which Herbert had carried in for Miss Arundel's inspection, all of them empty. There was not a trace of ruby, emerald or sapphire, nor was the big blue diamond anywhere to be seen.

The cry from the sanctum brought Hector from his desk with a rush, while Sam Meyer vaulted over the counter and joined him in the run for the door.

"Robbery! Murder!" gasped Sam Meyer. "Oh, Hector, this is a fearful business! And Herb gone, too!"

"Don't you dare hint it, Sam Meyer!" flashed Hector, as pale as death. "If Herb is gone then he has gone in chase of the murderer! Here, help me to lift the old man up! He may not be dead yet. Telephone for a doctor! Call in the police! Do something, anything, only don't you dare to accuse my brother of this fearful crime!"

Of course, Hector was blazing with excitement and terror.

Naturally so, as will be seen when we explain. And yet Sam Meyer had merely drawn a natural inference from the surrounding circumstances as anybody else might have done.

Let us explain.

There were two doors to the sanctum which was actually a part of the hallway on this floor.

The front door opened on the side of the little room into the main office of the diamond firm, while the back door opened

upon an iron bridge which led across a shallow courtyard and into the old building fronting John Street, immediately in the rear.

Years before a large printing and stationery concern had occupied the floors both of the John Street and the Maiden Lane buildings, and it was then that the bridge was built.

When Whitmark & Zollman took the Maiden Lane floor the sanctum was built at the end of the hall and the bridge door was fastened up. Later when the famous diamond cutter, Van Slyk, hired a room in the John Street building, which had also been so altered as to include part of the old hallway, Mr. Zollman had the door again made to open, for Van Slyk did a great deal of business with the firm and both he and Mr. Zollman found it very convenient to cross the old bridge and tap on each other's doors, thus saving a long walk around the block.

It was the fact that the bridge door stood open in the sanctum that made Sam Meyer instantly suspect that Herbert, having committed the crime, had made his mistake that way.

"I'm not accusing anybody, Hector!" he exclaimed. "But Herb ought to be here now if he is innocent. Run into Van Slyk's and see if he is there. The old man is dead, fast enough. Great heavens, this is a terrible thing!"

Hector made a choking answer which was altogether inaudible, and leaving Sam to raise up Mr. Zollman he went dashing across the bridge.

The door at the other end was closed, but unfastened.

Hector tore it open and dashed into the diamond cutter's room.

There was no one there.

Mr. Van Slyk, who worked alone, was missing; the front door of the room was partly wood and partly glass. The glass had been broken and the thin partition between the panes with it; but the door was fast locked.

Poor Hector's heart sank.

It looked exactly as though some one entering by the rear and finding the door fastened and the diamond cutter absent, had broken out the glass, crawled through the opening and gone downstairs to the street.

"Oh, it can't be! It can't be!" moaned the boy. "Herbert would never do it! Even the big blue diamond would not tempt him. There is some terrible mistake!"

Bach he flew over the bridge.

Sam Meyer stood by the body of Mr. Zollman and there at the door leading into the office was Van Slyk!

"My, my, my! But this is terrible!" he was exclaiming. "Who would ever have supposed that Herbert Howard would do such a thing?"

"It is false!" shouted Hector, wildly. "My brother is innocent! There is some dreadful mystery here, but—but—"

This was as far as Hector got.

He was a nervous boy at the best and not over strong.

The excitement was all too much for him and he dropped in a dead faint beside the table, falling within a few inches of the pool of blood.

When Hector came to himself he was lying upon the table, surrounded by several persons.

Sam Meyer was there, so was Mr. Martin Fox, the lawyer who represented the interests of the Whitmark estate in the jewelry firm.

Besides, there were two policemen. One was the captain of the precinct, as Hector could tell by the gold letters on his hat.

"He is coming to," the captain was saying. "He will be all right in a minute. You say, young man, that he never left his desk until the cry for help was heard?"

"Never!" replied Sam. "Hector is as innocent as I am—to that I will swear."

"Of course, of course," said Van Slyk. "To accuse him would be nonsense. You might as well accuse me."

"It would be hard to accuse you, sir," said the captain, "when you have proved that you were coming round the block in time this occurred. It was lucky that you stopped in at the cigar store on the corner. That proves your case, of course."

"Yes, yes!" cried Van Slyk. "It was very lucky! But, then, I always am lucky, gentlemen. Very lucky, indeed!"

"Hector Howard, you had better get off of that table if you are able to stand," said Lawyer Fox, coldly. "We want your story about this affair, young man."

Hector slid off the table and supported himself by one hand.

"Is he dead?" he gasped.

"Yes," replied the lawyer.

Hector glanced at the white sheet used for covering the cases at night, which had been thrown over the body of Mr. Zollman on the floor, and shuddered.

"Has my brother come back?" he asked.

"No, he has not," replied the lawyer; "and it is not likely that he will come back of his own accord; but my detectives are after him. He cannot escape. Another is now on his way here to investigate. Better make a clean breast of it before he comes, young man, if you have anything to tell."

"I have nothing to tell, because I know nothing!" cried Hector. "But one thing I will say, my brother is innocent. Whatever may be the explanation of this mystery, I say again, my brother never committed this fearful crime!"

There was a footstep outside in the office just then, and an old man, shabbily dressed, wearing a battered plug hat and a pair of green spectacles, which completely concealed his eyes, thrust his head through the open door.

CHAPTER III.

OLD BLINKER.

The defiant declaration made by Hector Howard in behalf of his brother failed to attract any attention on account of the sudden appearance of the old man at the door, for all turned to look at him, when the police captain exclaimed:

"Ah, Blinker! You are prompt. Here's a case for you, but it is such a plain one that I feel almost ashamed of having called you to it. I didn't realize that there was no doubt about the identity of the guilty party when I called you over the 'phone."

This then was the far-famed Old Blinker, the famous sleuth, whose remarkable work at detecting crime had made his name a household word all over the United States.

From the crown of his shabby old hat to the soles of his unblacked shoes, Old Blinker was a man of mystery.

Who he was or where he originally learned his business, no one but the police knew. His singular cognomen had doubtless attached itself to the man from a habit of constantly winking, which threw his green spectacles up and down in a peculiar way, and, of course, was not his real name. That, it was said, not even the police themselves knew. Certainly it was known to no one else.

"I don't know about it being all so plain, captain," said the detective, in a thin, peculiar voice. "Sometimes these apparently plain cases are the most complex. What is the story? What has happened here?"

"Murder and robbery," was the reply. "The proprietor murdered in this room, a big blue diamond valued at \$50,000 stolen, together with a lot of smaller gems worth as much more."

And the captain went on to tell the story as Sam Meyer had told it to him, making it appear as though there was no doubt of Herbert's guilt.

Hector shuddered as he listened, but he did not say a word.

"So," replied Old Blinker. "Has the coroner been called?"

"He has. I expect him here any minute," was the answer.

"And as a few minutes may elapse before he comes, let them be mine to investigate. Captain, let all leave the room but yourself."

"Don't you want to question these two young men first?" asked the captain.

"No," replied Old Blinker. "Let it be just as I say."

Then while the police captain and the detective remained shut up in the room, Hector got his share of questioning from Mr. Fox; Van Slyk, the diamond setter, taking a hand in.

It was very painful to be put under this fire of questions.

Sam Meyer, however, stood by Hector nobly and declared that it was simply impossible for him to have had anything to do with the affair.

"Herbert came to me and told me that Mr. Zollman wanted to see me about the big blue diamond," explained Van Slyk, "and said that I was to come around the block instead of across the bridge as usual."

"Those were his orders," put in Sam. "I heard the boss give them, myself."

"I was just finishing a job and had to go to the custom house to see about some watch diamonds which I had imported, and which were held to prove value," continued Van Slyk, "so I asked Herbert to go for me and said I would be around as soon as I could. I finished the job and locked the door and hurried around the block, stopping in at the cigar store on the corner of Broadway and Maiden Lane for a light, as I said, and—"

Just here the door opened and the coroner came bustling in.

The policeman tapped on the sanctum door and notified the captain, who came out and took the coroner into the room.

A few moments later both came out together.

Old Blinker had vanished. The captain announced that he had left by the way of the bridge and Van Slyk's office.

"If you will excuse me, gentlemen, I'll get back to my office," said Van Slyk. "It's rather exposed with the door broken. First thing I know I shall be robbed."

"Just a moment!" said the captain. "Mr. Fox, the coroner agrees with our friend, Old Blinker. There has been no murder done here."

"No murder!" cried the lawyer and Van Slyk in one breath.

"No," continued the captain. "Mr. Zollman died of hemorrhage of the lungs. There isn't a scratch on the body."

"It is so," added the coroner.

"And the case is plain," continued the captain. "This boy, Herbert Howard, seeing the man's condition and knowing that Mr. Van Slyk was, in all probability, not in his workshop, seized the gems and made off with them. Case of sudden temptation, no doubt. But we shall nab the young rascal. A general alarm has been sent out. He cannot escape."

"Gentlemen," Hector burst out, "do not believe it. You do not know my brother. He would no more rob a dying man than he would cut off his hand!"

"That's right," said the captain, "speak up for your brother. I'll see you later, Mr. Fox. The coroner will give you a permit to remove the body. I must go now."

"So must I," said Van Slyk; "my place must be left no longer alone."

They left then, and the coroner soon followed them.

The day wore on drearily. The undertaker came and the body of Mr. Zollman was removed.

At five o'clock Mr. Fox ordered the office closed.

"You need not come back again, Hector Howard," he said, coldly. "I have your address. I will send you what money is due you. Consider yourself discharged."

Hector bowed silently. He had done all the talking he cared to do long before this. There had been no misunderstanding the lawyer's cold manner. Hector had fully expected his discharge.

They all left together, Mr. Fox locking the outer door and taking the key.

"Hector, I'm awfully sorry," said Sam Meyer, following on with Hector toward Broadway. "I hope you don't blame me, old man?"

"For what?" asked Hector, gloomily.

"For your discharge. I—"

"Oh, never mind, Sam. You thought you were doing the right thing, I suppose; all the same, I must say that I think you might have spoken a good word for poor Herb."

"I've nothing against him," replied Sam. "Nobody would like to see Herb proved innocent any better than I would."

"But you believe him guilty?"

"How can I help it?"

"He is innocent; and I will live to prove it!" cried Hector. "Don't speak to me again, Sam Meyer. I don't know you from this time on—understand?"

Hector was half wild with grief or perhaps he would not have said it.

He pulled away from Sam and hurried around into Broadway.

It was the season of short days, and night had already settled down upon the great city.

Scarce realizing where he went, Hector pushed along through the crowd and turned into John Street, with some wild idea of interviewing Van Slyk.

He had not gone a hundred feet from Broadway when a coupe flew past him; and as it went by the electric light in front of a certain noted cafe, Hector, to his utter amazement, saw his brother Herbert seated inside and staring out of the window.

He did not seem to see Hector. For the instant his eyes rested upon him and then he turned his head away.

"Herb! Herb!" shouted Hector, forgetting the impossibility of making his brother hear.

He made one spring after the flying coupe and would have given chase if at the same instant some one had not seized him by the arm and swung him violently around.

"Let me go!" cried Hector, struggling, and then he perceived that he was in the hands of Old Blinker, who held him with an iron grip.

"This way, young man!" whispered the detective. "No excitement, please! Here is your coupe. You are going to ride with me!"

He thrust Hector through the open door of a coupe which stood at the curb, and sprang in after him.

In a moment they were rolling up Broadway.

CHAPTER IV.

A USELESS JOURNEY.

The chief peculiarity about Old Blinker was his terseness of speech, so those who knew him best claimed.

Every time he put a question or made a statement his brow contracted, his eyes blinks, and his green glasses waggled.

Old Blinker dealt in questions and brief statements.

If circumstances ever made it necessary for him to make any extended statement, he always wrote it down and read it off to those interested.

No one had ever known the old detective to tell a long story, and he had been connected with the New York police force for a good many years.

It was not until they were fairly in the coupe that Old Blinker let go his hold on Hector Howard.

"Don't fight me, boy. I'm the best friend you own!" he exclaimed, and his spectacles wagged up and down.

"I have no friends," said Hector. "My brother was my only friend, and he is gone now."

"No!"

"No what?"

"You have friends. I'm one."

"But only to suit your own purposes. You think you can make something out of me; that's why you call yourself my friend."

"Of course. It is so with everybody."

"What do you want with me? Why did you pull me into this coupe?"

"Why did you try to pull away from me, Hector?"

"I don't have to tell you, and I'm not going to."

"I'll tell you."

"Perhaps you can't."

"I can. You saw your brother in the coupe ahead."

"You have been watching me."

"No; I have been watching a house."

"John Street?"

"Yes."

"Did my brother come out of that building?"

"Yes, with Mr. Van Slyk."

"I knew it! I was sure Van Slyk knew more than he cared to tell about this business. When I heard that he made the police captain go around to the cigar store with him to prove that he was there at the time the robbery took place in the sanctum I was sure he was deeper in it than he cared to own."

"Just so; but you are jumping at conclusions."

"Why did you watch the John Street building if you did not think so, too?"

"Because I am studying this case."

"Where are we going?"

"Wherever that other coupe goes."

"Is Van Slyk in it with my brother?"

"Yes."

"Do tell me something definite. Do you believe my brother guilty?"

"I don't know."

"He is innocent. I'll swear to it."

"I know. I heard you say that before, but you don't know."

"I know my brother."

"Somebody is guilty, Hector."

"Why not Van Slyk? What was to hinder him from coming across the bridge and robbing Mr. Zollman, and then going back again and passing around the block and coming into our place by the front door?"

"Nothing at all."

"Do you think he did it?"

"I don't know."

"But you have your theory. You must All detectives have."

"I never have theories. I deal only in facts."

"Theories lead to the discovery of facts."

"Well said. Probably one of three persons did this business, Hector Howard."

"Three? Well, that's a theory."

"Call it so if you wish."

"Who are the three?"

"Your brother first, Van Slyk second, Miss Berenice Arundel third."

"The last is nonsense. Miss Arundel had left the place half an hour before the robbery could have occurred."

"So Sam Meyer said."

"Then why do you hold to that idea?"

"Because probably these three were the only persons who went into Mr. Zollman's private room."

"What is it?"

"Your brother is in that coupe ahead. He came out of the John Street building with Sam Slyk."

"Oh!" groaned Hector. "What does it all mean?"

"You don't know. I don't know," replied Old Blinker.

"But I will know! If I can only see Her-

bert for one instant he will tell me."

"Perhaps yes, perhaps no. I want you to see him. That's why I collared you as I did."

"But we are not going very fast. We are not trying to overtake the other coupe."

"No."

"Why don't you do it?"

"Because I want to find out where Van Slyk is going to take your brother."

"Does the driver understand?"

"The driver is one of my most skillful assistants. He understands perfectly."

"Oh, I wish I could do something."

"You are doing your best now. Stick to me, and if your brother is innocent I shall prove it. I have done talking now. I want to think."

And from that time forward Hector could get little or nothing out of Old Blinker.

From time to time the detective would ask him a question, but when Hector tried to resume the conversation he always failed.

Afterward, when he came to think over the events of this ride, he saw that the detective had little by little drawn from him the simple story of his past, as well as all he personally knew about the affair of the big blue diamond, and yet it had all been done so deftly that Hector did not realize what he was doing at that time.

Meanwhile the coupe rolled on. There was no haste, but they kept steadily on the move.

The Brooklyn Bridge was crossed, and they went out one of the many interminable avenues in the City of Churches.

At last they came to a brilliantly lighted avenue and passed under the tracks of an elevated railroad, plunging instantly into a dimly lighted narrow street beyond.

Peering out of the window, Hector saw that this street was lined with shabby frame dwellings. He could not see the coupe ahead, and he wondered if it was still there.

Soon they were rolling past vacant lots, with an occasional house here and there.

To Hector, who knew nothing about Brooklyn, it was all a mystery. He only knew that they must have covered many miles.

All at once the coupe stopped, and the driver rapped on the glass.

Old Blinker sprang out, and Hector followed him.

They were on an unpaved street at the foot of a long hill, up which a railroad track ran.

A noisy motor car with clanging bell flew past them.

The place was singularly lonely. On one side was a big brewery with a park attached; on the other vacant lots stretched out, with twinkling lights far beyond.

"What's the matter?" demanded Old Blinker angrily. "Why did you stop?"

"I have lost them," replied the driver.

"Lost them?"

"Yes."

"You let them drop too far behind?"

"That was the trouble."

"Behind!" exclaimed Hector. "I thought they were ahead of us?"

"Don't interfere," snapped Old Blinker.

"Where are we?" he added, addressing the driver again.

"On the Cypress Hills road, almost out to the reservoir."

"Was there any chance for them to make a detour?"

"Yes. They may have gone in at the road which leads to O'Brien's lampblack factory and come out ahead of us. O'Brien's road makes a circuit. He could do it if he drove fast."

"When did you last see them?"

"When I passed Welher's Brewery. They were coming along all right then."

"Then so far my theory of their destination has been perfectly correct?"

"Yes."

"Drive on as rapidly as possible. Unless you see them don't stop till you reach Schneider's Hotel at the Cypress Hills gate."

Thus saying Old Blinker ordered Hector back into the coupe and sprang in after him.

"The game is up, I'm afraid," he remarked.

"I don't understand why we were ahead of the coupe we were supposed to be following," said Hector at the risk of being called down again.

"Probably not."

"What shall you do if you don't come up with them?"

"Go back to New York."

"But—"

"Do you suppose I am going to drive around this place all night without any object?" Old Blinker flashed.

Hector subsided.

The coupe rolled on.

At last it stopped, and the driver got off the box.

"Well, here we are at Schneider's," he said. "I've seen nothing of them."

"All right," replied Old Blinker quietly. "Go into the hotel and get a drink. Water your horses and go home."

The long ride back to New York was made in almost perfect silence, so far as Old Blinker was concerned. He simply would not talk.

This time they crossed the 23d Street ferry, and when the coupe stopped it was in front of the lodging house on East 23d Street where the Howard brothers had their room.

"Here we are at your house, young man," said Old Blinker. "You can get out now."

"How did you know I lived here?" demanded Hector, amazed.

"Directory," was the answer.

Hector's heart sank.

He knew he was up against the reporters for the yellow journals, and so it proved.

It was of no use to try to avoid them, of course, and Hector faced the music bravely, and allowed himself to be interviewed.

He confined his answers to a simple statement of facts, however, and boldly asserted his belief in his brother's innocence.

Concerning the mysterious ride with Old Blinker he made no mention at all.

It was tossing and turning, thinking and wondering all night long.

While Hector would not have been willing to admit to himself that he had lost confidence in his brother, the same question would keep coming into his mind again and again.

Why was Herbert in the coupe with Van Slyk?

That Hector resolved to see the diamond cutter first thing next morning goes without saying, but the first thing he actually did was to buy the papers, and he read them so intently on his way downtown that he totally forgot a letter which the postman had put into his hands just as he was leaving the house.

The account of the death of Mr. Zollman and the robbery was given with a fair amount of accuracy in most of the papers.

A post-mortem held at the undertaker's shop had demonstrated beyond question that the jeweler had died a natural death.

Indeed, it was stated that Mr. Fox, the lawyer, who was practically his partner, informed the coroner that Mr. Zollman had been for some time afflicted with consumption.

Hector knew that his employer coughed terribly at times, and was in wretched health, so there seemed no doubt that the conclusion was correct.

Concerning the robbery, there seemed to be but one opinion.

Herbert Howard was the thief, according to all the papers.

Van Slyk's name was only casually mentioned, and Miss Arundel did not appear at all.

The papers all stated that the detectives were hot on Herbert's trail, and that his arrest was only a question of a few hours at the most.

The only other point of real interest to Hector was the fact that Mr. Fox had offered \$5,000 dollars reward for the recovery of the missing gems.

It was almost too much, even for Hector.

That away down in the bottom of his heart he was beginning to have his doubts of his brother cannot be denied.

Just before he left the elevated cars Hector remembered his letter.

It proved to be from Mr. Fox, and read as follows:

"Hector Howard:—Dear sir, I want to see you at my office in the Boreel Building this morning. I shall be accessible between ten and twelve. Do not fail to call, or I shall find it necessary to send for you, which might not be pleasant. Yours,

"Martin Fox."

"So he threatens me!" muttered Hector, crumpling up the letter. "Well, I don't like that man. I believe he is a rascal. However, I have nothing to conceal, so I shall call."

He went to Van Slyk's first, however.

There was a board nailed over the broken door, and the diamond cutter was at work at his bench.

He looked up with a scowl when Hector entered, but he said good-morning civilly enough, and asked him what he wanted.

"I want to know about my brother, Mr. Van Slyk," said Hector, trembling with agitation. "Last night I saw him riding up John Street in a coupe with you."

"Never!" flashed Van Slyk, throwing down the tool he held.

"But I saw him."

"You may have seen him, for all I know, but you never saw him with me."

This was true enough, of course.

Hector saw that he had made a mistake.

"The coupe left the door of this building," he persisted. "Herbert looked out of the window at me, and—"

"Get out of here! Get out of here!" roared Van Slyk. "I won't talk about it. You tell lies. Your brother is a thief! The police will prove it. Get out, or I'll throw this hammer at your head."

His rage was terrible. He looked so threatening with the heavy hammer in his hand that Hector fled.

He was just leaving the building, when some one touched him on the shoulder, and turning he saw Old Blinker at his side.

"Ha! I knew you would do it," breathed the detective. "Well?"

"You here? What do you mean?" Hector gasped.

"What did he say?"

"He denied it."

"Of course, of course! Were you fool enough to tell him about last night?"

"I only told him that I saw my brother in the coupe with him, that's all."

"Then it is not as bad as I feared, though it is bad enough. Don't do it again, Hector Howard, if you value your brother's life."

Thus saying, Old Blinker shot off down the street, mingling with the crowd.

Hector's first thought was to follow him, but something seemed to tell him that he had better not, and he went around to the Boreel Building instead.

He was ushered into Mr. Fox's private office as soon as he announced his name.

The lawyer greeted him coldly, and rising closed the door.

"Well, Mr. Howard, have you seen anything of your brother?" he asked.

"No, sir," replied Hector, resolved to be entirely on his guard.

"You received my letter?"

"Yes."

"Have you anything to say to me that you did not say yesterday?"

"No."

"Think about it carefully, young man."

"I do not need to do any thinking. I say no."

"Very well. You are aware, Mr. Howard, that I took but little personal interest in the affairs of Whitmark & Zollman, therefore I know but little about either you or your brother. How long have you been with the firm?"

"About two years."

"And your brother?"

"About four years."

"Where did you come from?"

"Craneville, New York, sir. I thought you knew."

"I know nothing about you. How came Mr. Zollman to hire you?"

"Why, my mother was a niece of the late Mr. Whitmark, and was well acquainted with Mr. Zollman years ago. Mr. Zollman gave my brother a position at her request, and I came along later. I thought you knew all that, Mr. Fox."

"No," replied Mr. Fox, twirling his thumbs. "No, I knew nothing about it. Tell me more."

"There is no more to tell."

"It is singular that Mr. Whitmark left your mother nothing if she was his niece." "So my mother thought at the time."

"But he did not. I am trustee of his estate. The will reads that it is to be held intact for ten years, and then all goes to a German university in the town from which Mr. Whitmark originally came."

"So I have understood."

"Your mother is dead?"

"Yes, sir; three years ago."

"Her maiden name was what?"

"Greta Reiner. She was the daughter of Mr. Whitmark's sister."

"It is very strange that I never heard of all this," said Mr. Fox. "Mr. Whitmark distinctly told me that he had no living relatives. His will makes no mention of your mother, as I have said."

"There had been some quarrel between my mother and her uncle," replied Hector. "He objected to her marriage. My father was an American and a farmer. Mr. Whitmark wanted my mother to marry Mr. Zollman after his wife died. At least, so I have been told."

"By your mother?"

"No; by an old servant in our family, now dead. My mother never mentioned the matter at all."

"This is all news to me," said the lawyer slowly, "but it only makes me the more determined to do what I proposed to do when I wrote you yesterday afternoon. I feel sorry to have been obliged to discharge you, but under the circumstances I could not do otherwise. Moreover, you would have soon lost your position in any event, for Mr. Zollman's affairs are much involved. He has speculated on Wall Street, and of late lost heavily. I hold a mortgage on all the stock, and he leaves no real estate. In fact, everything belongs to the Whitmark estate, and I propose to wind the business up at once."

"Yes, sir," said Hector, as Mr. Fox paused.

He began to wonder if he was to be presented with a check on his late grandfather's account.

Mr. Fox, however, had no such ideas. Opening his desk he took out a card and wrote a few lines upon it.

"See that party, Howard," he said. "He is a friend of mine, and when I last spoke with him he told me that he was looking for a bright young man to instruct in his peculiar views as to surgery, and that he would stand for all expenses. You may be able to do something with him. I hope so. I have nothing against you. I trust that your brother may prove to be innocent, but if he turns out guilty he need not look for any mercy at my hands. That's all. Good-day."

Hector glanced at the card, which contained the printed name and address of a Doctor Braunlich. Beneath this Mr. Fox had written:

"Dear Doctor:—The bearer is a bright young man. He may suit your purpose. Deal with him as you think best. He is without means or friends. M. T."

"Who told you I was without friends?" flashed Hector, stung by these last words.

"Have you any friends?" asked the lawyer coldly.

"No! Not one in the world; but I have myself, sir, and I shall prove my brother's innocence in spite of all you may think or say."

It was a bold defiance.

Having uttered it Hector left the office and passed into the hall.

As he was hurrying toward the elevator the door of the next office of Mr. Fox's suite softly opened, and an old man shabbily dressed, with a pen behind his ear, shuffled along the hall.

"Just a moment," he whispered, touching Hector on the arm. "You were in Fox's office, were you not?"

"I was," replied Hector coldly.

"Just so," replied the man. "You are Hector Howard?"

"That's my name."

"Mine is Pringle. I am his clerk. Don't come here again. Don't go near that doctor. Beware!"

Having uttered this singular warning Mr. Pringle shuffled back to the office, and opening the door disappeared.

CHAPTER VI.

AT THE FUNERAL.

If ever the great city of New York contained an uneasy boy Hector Howard was that boy during the next two days.

And yet there was "nothing doing," as the saying goes.

The detectives seemed to be all at sea in the Zollman case.

As for the papers, they kept up the excitement by rehashing the same old material.

No trace of Herbert Howard could be discovered. There was nothing new discovered.

No one came near Hector. Even old Blinker appeared to have dropped the matter, so far as he was concerned.

Saturday came; it was a dreadful day. Rain and snow fell, mixed together, the streets were full of slush, and the atmosphere was thick with fog.

Yet the state of the weather could not be taken as a course for the postponement of the funeral of jeweler Zollman, which had been advertised to take place from the undertaker's shop on the East Side, to which the body had been originally removed.

Mr. Fox was there, Sam Meyer was there, and so was Van Slyk, the diamond cutter, but these were the only persons Hector knew outside of a few representatives of the jewelry trade in John Street and Maiden Lane.

The service took place in the back room of the undertaker's shop, and Hector sat on a camp stool in one corner.

Next to him sat a lady in deep black, and so heavily veiled that Hector could not catch the slightest glimpse of her features. She came late, just before the beginning of the services, and while they proceeded never moved nor raised her head, nor did she look at the remains as almost all present did.

There were only three carriages.

One for Mr. Fox, one for Van Slyk, who was alone, and who the third carriage was for Hector did not know until the veiled lady came out in the storm and stepped into it.

She said something to the undertaker, who turned to Hector and said:

"Your place is in this carriage, young man."

"Oh, I am not going to the grave," replied Hector; "besides, I am not acquainted with that lady."

"The lady knows you, and desires it. Your name is Howard, is it not?"

"It certainly is. I should like to see the last of Mr. Zollman. He was always good to me."

"Step right in, then," said the undertaker, and as Hector did so he hastily banged the carriage door.

"All ready!" he called out to the driver of the hearse, and the funeral moved off in the storm.

Hector turned to the veiled lady. Naturally he waited for her to speak or make some sign, but she only drew her veil closer and looked out of the window on the other side.

"Some mistake," thought Hector. "She doesn't know me, of course. If she did she would speak now."

But the veiled lady did not speak, and the carriage dragged on to the 23d Street ferry.

It was just the same on the ferryboat.

When the funeral started up Broadway Hector ventured to remark that it was a very disagreeable afternoon.

"Yes," was faintly murmured behind the veil, and then it was the same silence again.

Hector began to wonder to what cemetery they were going, for he had neglected to ask.

The ride seemed interminable.

At last they struck the Cypress Hills road, and Hector had a chance to see by the fading light the ground over which he had passed with Old Blinker on the night of Mr. Zollman's death.

He had ceased to wonder about his silent companion long before, and his thoughts were not upon her when, with a quick movement of her hand, she threw back the veil, and to his utter astonishment disclosed the face of Miss Berenice Arundel, the daughter of one of New York's best-known multi-millionaires.

"I can't stand it any longer," she ex-

claimed in her usual lively fashion. "I suppose you will think it very strange in me to attend this funeral and follow to the grave in all this storm, but I had a great respect for Mr. Zollman. He was very accommodating to me, Mr. Howard, as you well know."

"I know," replied Hector, blushing under her fixed gaze. "I don't know why you should not attend if you wish. You were our best customer, Miss Arundel. It was very kind of you to—"

"To invite you into my carriage," the girl broke in. "Well, I saw you standing there so forlorn, and I felt so sorry for you. It is just dreadful about your brother! Such a civil young man, too. I won't believe he stole that big blue diamond. I just won't! He wasn't that sort. There's some dreadful mystery about it all. Then there were all those other gems. Just as though he would have robbed a dying man!"

Her face flushed, and her eyes sparkled, and she seemed so excited about it all that Hector grew very nervous under her eager questioning.

Had he seen or heard of his brother?

What was his theory? Might not Van Slyk easily have committed the robbery? Could not a tramp have sneaked in over the bridge?

Miss Arundel seemed to have weighed all the pros and cons of the case, and she kept the talk right up until they reached the grave, which was in one corner of a certain small cemetery near to Cypress Hills, the name of which for several reasons we propose to conceal.

The coffin was lowered in the snow and rain.

Then it was "dust to dust, ashes to ashes," and the clods of earth struck the box hollowly.

Miss Arundel, veiled again, clutched Hector's hand in a nervous tremor.

"I'm going now," she whispered. "I shan't wait for them to cover him up. Take me to my carriage, please. Here is a letter I want you to read. Don't open it till after I am gone, please. No, don't take me that way. I want to go the other. I don't want even the skirt of my dress to touch that horrid Van Slyk."

Hector put the envelope which she pressed upon him into his pocket, and led the way to the carriage, assisting the girl to enter.

"Good-by," she whispered. "It will all come out right. Herbert is innocent, I am certain. Good-by."

"Thank you, Miss Arundel. Good-by," replied Hector, and then as the carriage rolled away through the mud and slush he opened the letter, which was no letter, for the envelope simply enclosed a hundred-dollar bill!

Hector stared at it in astonishment.

"What can she mean by it?" he thought.

"Can it be that she is in love with Herb?"

"Ah! Drawn a prize, eh?" said a voice at his elbow, and out from behind a hedge stepped Old Blinker, the detective, with his green glasses waggling up and down.

CHAPTER VII.

WITH OLD BLINKER AT THE GRAVEYARD.

"Mr. Blinker! You here! I did not see you at the grave!" Hector gasped.

"That is because I wasn't at the grave."

"But you are here now!"

"Evidently I was standing behind the ledge watching you. Who is your friend?"

"I don't know why I should not tell you."

"Nor do I. Better do it."

"It is confidential, of course."

"Oh, certainly."

"She is Miss Arundel."

"I thought so. She was at the funeral?"

"Yes. I rode in the carriage with her."

"What did she have to say?"

"She believes my brother innocent."

"So do I."

"You do?"

"I said it."

"Have you seen him? Have you learned anything?"

"I have neither seen him nor learned anything that I did not know when I saw you last. Why did she give you that hundred-dollar bill, boy?"

"I can't tell you unless it was to help me find Herbert and prove his innocence."

"She was well acquainted with your brother?"

"Oh, yes. He often waited on her. Since Mr. Zollman became so sick he was not always at the office, then Herbert was in charge."

"Zollman seemed to have every confidence in your brother?"

"Indeed he did. Herb had the combination of the safe and the key of the office door. It is absurd to charge him with this crime. He could have gone in there any night and cleaned out the place. Unless he suddenly lost his senses he would no more touch even the smallest gem in the place than he would have cut off his right hand."

"Ah! Yes, of course, unless!"

"You don't think he went mad, do you?"

"It was one of

"But what drove him mad you were going to say. Don't ask me."

"It is all a mystery," sighed Hector. "But they have covered up the grave now. They are coming this way. If you don't want to be seen—"

"On the contrary, I have no reason that I know of for concealing myself. Good day, Mr. Fox. Good day, Mr. Van Slyk. Sad occasion this, gentlemen! Sad, indeed!"

Old Blinker seemed to have grown very talkative all of a sudden as the mourners approached.

"Yes," replied the lawyer, "it is all very sad. Hector, how are you? This is Mr. Blinker, I believe?"

"The same. Detective, you know."

"Yes, yes. Van Slyk, here is Mr. Blinker. Perhaps he has news of that boy."

"No," said Blinker, wagging his green glasses.

"You detectives are dead slow in this business," the diamond cutter remarked.

"Yes," said Blinker. "Oh, yes. We are dead slow."

"You had better get a move on you!" growled Van Slyk, and, scowling at Hector, he walked on to his carriage.

Mr. Fox, however, did not appear to be in quite so much haste.

"Hector, have you called on Doctor Braunlich yet?" he asked, in the soft, pussy-cat tones which he usually assumed when talking to his female clients, of which he had a fair share.

"No," replied Hector, "I haven't had the chance."

"You had better make time to go soon. He is a fine man, and to get in with him and study to be a surgeon would be a fine thing for a poor boy like you. Take my advice and don't neglect the opportunity. Nasty day, Mr. Blinker. Hope you will succeed in finding the thief. Good day!"

"Hypocrite!" muttered the old detective, shaking his fist behind the lawyer's back as the latter stepped into his carriage. "A blasted hypocrite! That's what he is!"

"I don't like him, either," replied Hector. "I never did."

"What about this Doctor Braunlich?" the detective asked.

Hector told about the card.

He did not mention the warning he had received from Mr. Pringle.

As yet he had not come to fully trust Old Blinker, and he considered this his own affair.

"Don't you go," said the detective. "I have heard of this doctor. He is a noted surgeon on the east side who has written a book on comparative anatomy. He bears an excellent reputation and is called upon to assist in difficult operations in some of our largest hospitals, but take my advice and don't you go."

This was certainly the longest speech Hector ever heard Old Blinker make, but the detective seemed to be in a particularly communicative mood that evening.

It now began to snow harder, and the rain entirely ceased.

The hearse and the carriages had departed; the grave diggers were finishing off their work.

It sent a cold chill all through Hector to hear them slap the little mound of earth with their spades. Tears sprang to his eyes and he turned his head away.

"Ha! Tears! Tears!" said Old Blinker, putting his arm through Hector's and starting to walk down the path. "Who are they shed for? Your brother? For the dead man or for yourself? Which?"

"It's nothing," said Hector, hastily.

"On the contrary, it is everything. Tears show a kind heart, and God knows there are only too many of the hard-hearted sort in this world."

"Mr. Zollman was always good to me," replied Hector. "He would have been the last man to accuse poor Herb, but Mr. Fox seems to be a man of a different sort."

"Right! The hard-hearted sort, the cold-blooded sort, the fishy sort, the hypocritical sort—perhaps worse."

"I wonder if he could have come across the bridge and stolen the big blue diamond?" muttered Hector.

"Ah, there!" chuckled Old Blinker. "What are you talking about now?"

"He knew all about the place. When you come to think of it, no tramp would ever have dared."

"Does a man steal his own?"

"Who says it was his own? Mr. Fox only represents the Whitmark estate. He had not a dollar's worth of interest in the diamond."

"Hold on, hold on! You are going too fast and too far. The Whitmark estate is practically Martin Fox. He never intends to settle it up until he is forced to. When that German university gets its own it will be on some Sunday in the middle of the week. Ha, ha, ha!"

"I believe you! He is a rascal. I'll tell you something, Mr. Blinker."

"Good! I knew you had something to tell me. Go on."

"You are not the only one who warned me against this Doctor Braunlich."

"No?"

"No. Mr. Fox's own clerk followed me into the hall that day Fox gave me the card and told me to beware of him."

"So. Old Pete Pringle?"

"You know him?"

"Don't I! So does Fox. He's an ex-convict, a broken man. Gets ten dollars a week from Foxy to do his dirty work. Know him! Why, I could send the man back to Sing Sing by merely raising my hand."

"What do you know about the doctor?"

"Nothing."

"But you hinted at—"

"Nothing. Only rumors. They say he can never be seen in the evening. He lives alone; a double life, some say. He has had three or four assistants. They remain with him for a short time and then disappear. I never heard of one of them turning up again."

"You don't mean to say—"

"I mean to say nothing, because I know nothing. I never investigated Doctor Braunlich. I am only repeating common rumor in detective circles. Now, I'll tell you something that I do know."

"What is that?"

"You and your brother are old Whitmark's nephews."

"Grandnephews."

"It is all the same. Your mother should have been his heir, but she was cut off by the will. Strange."

"Not at all. They had quarreled."

"I said strange and I mean strange. Some day we will talk more about this. Meanwhile let us go in here and have a drink, for it is a cold night and I am an old man. I'm chilled through to the very bone."

They had now passed out of the cemetery gate and stood facing a country road.

Back of the gate, almost concealed among a thick clump of spruce trees, was a small, octagonal building which Hector could not remember to have seen before.

"We did not come in this way, Mr. Blinker," he exclaimed.

"By 'we' I suppose you mean yourself and Miss Arundel?" replied the detective.

"I did. Where are we?"

"On the Glendale road. That's on the other side of the cemetery. You came in off the Cypress Hills road."

"I know nothing of this part of the world."

"And I know all about it. Best of all, I know that over in that house they sell the very worst whisky in creation. Let's go over and have a drink."

"I will go with you, of course, but I want no drink. I never tasted whisky in my life. I wouldn't know good from bad."

"You would know this if you once tasted it, for it would choke you. Still, mixed with hot water and sugar I can worry it down. Here we are; walk in."

The place was one of the many small hotels to be found near the cemeteries back of Brooklyn.

Gloomy and barn-like most of them are. The barrooms are enormously large, made so to accommodate funeral crowds. When there is no funeral on hand and one sees them for the first time it is only to wonder why they were ever built, and where the trade comes from to keep them alive.

The bartender sat in a corner, reading a paper, a fat man and a man wearing the blue overalls of a grave digger were playing pinocchio at a round table; there was a huge bloodhound lying asleep by the red-hot stove. He opened his eyes and growled as Old Blinker and Hector passed him and walked toward the long bar.

"How are you?" said the detective, nodding to the fat man.

"Vell, I vos able to eat my tree meals a day," was the reply. "How vos you, und vat prangs you here again?"

Hector did not like the way the fat man looked at him. He began to feel nervous and uncomfortable, and heartily wished that he had not stopped to talk to Old Blinker, but had gone straight home, and this he resolved to do just as soon as he possibly could.

He was yet to learn that this was only the beginning of the night's adventures.

Hector was destined to have occasion to wish several times before morning dawned that he had gone straight home.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE ESCAPE FROM THE HOTEL.

"Why, friend, I only dropped in to have a drink," replied the detective, in answer to the fat man's ill-natured remark. "There is no harm in that, I suppose?"

"No," said the fat man; "only don't try to ask me no more of dose questions already, for I haf as much as I can do to mind mein own peezness—see?"

"To be sure," replied Old Blinker, briskly. "Now look here, I'm an old man, and this boy is my nephew. We came out here to a funeral and missed our way, so that's what brought us out on the wrong side of the cemetery. I don't feel able to go back to New York in all this storm, so I want a room with two beds in it, for which I am willing to pay—"

"No," broke in the fat man, "you can't haf no room. No!"

"To pay double price," continued Old Blinker, wagging his green glasses; "and as I never drink anything but champagne after dinner and like a good deal of that, I shall want three bottles. Here's a twenty-dollar bill, boss, and there will be no change. I used to run a hotel myself

and know what a nuisance it is to have unexpected guests drop in upon you. There'll be supper, too, for two, and breakfast besides; and neither one included in this, of course. If you haven't got steaks or chops, we will take ham and eggs; and there's no hurry seeing that we intend to stay all night."

Old Blinker could talk if he chose to! Hector thought that never in his life had he heard such a torrent of words rattled off with such lightning speed.

The fat man picked up the twenty-dollar bill which the detective threw down on the card-table and carefully examined it.

"Vell, vat you say, Jim?" he demanded, rising and passing the bill to the bartender, who also examined it.

"I don't want to stay here," Hector whispered.

"You must," breathed Old Blinker, treading on his toe. "Don't you say one word."

"It's good," said Jim, returning the bill, and then he added some hurried words in German.

"You can stay," said the fat man. "We will get supper und de room ready. Dere's de register at de end of de bar. Sign your name, please."

Old Blinker seized the pen and scrawled, "J. Ferguson, New York," and under it, "P. H. Ferguson."

"I can't do it. Let me go!" whispered Hector.

"Listen!" breathed the detective. "I now know that it was to this house that your brother was brought that night by Van Slyk. Go, if you must; but if you do, never expect me to raise my finger in your interest again."

Hector subsided.

Old Blinker called for hot whisky, and drank it off, Hector joining him with a glass of soda water.

Soon ham and eggs were served in a dirty dining-room where they were the only guests. Later they found themselves alone together in an upstairs room, where there was a fire and two beds, with three bottles of champagne on the table.

"There!" exclaimed Old Blinker, seating himself before the fire. "Now we are fixed. Open the wine, Hector, and pour the contents of the bottles out of the window. There's the corkscrew. Look out for the fizz, and don't get it on the carpet. Wretched trash! It would soon put us out of business if we were to swallow it, but we must dispose of it in case the waiter comes in again."

Hector obeyed, and returned the empty bottles to the table.

"What are we here for?" he demanded then. "I wish you would explain this mystery, Mr. Blinker. Why have you brought me to this wretched place?"

"Can't tell you now, dear boy. That will develop later on."

"But—"

"I never tell my business. Don't urge me. It's only wasted wind; what you want to do is to lie down on that bed and get a little sleep if you can, for you will need to be fresh later on."

And in the end, after some further talk, Hector did lie down and, strange to say, slept—although he was firmly resolved to do nothing of the kind.

The next he knew Old Blinker was shaking him by the shoulder.

"Wake up, Hector! Wake up!" he said, in a hurried whisper. "The time has come!"

Hector sprang to his feet.

"What is it? What's the matter?" he exclaimed. "Where am I, anyhow? Oh, I remember now!"

"I'm glad you do. Get awake, quick! We want to be getting out of this in a hurry. If that blamed bloodhound is outside it is all up with my plans, but I'm in hopes they have kept him in by the fire on account of the storm."

While talking Old Blinker was unwinding a mass of cordage which he had drawn from his pocket.

Hector saw that it was a ladder made of strong, tarred twine.

"What's that for?" he asked. "What do you mean to do?"

"No questions, please," replied the detective. "I've got all I can do to attend to business. Open the window. Thank heaven it is raining now instead of snow! There; that will hold, I guess, and it will give that fat Dutchman something to think about. Out she goes!"

Old Blinker had made the rope ladder fast to the leg of the bed and he now threw the other end out of the window. It easily reached the ground, and some to spare. The detective stood listening, but not a sound was heard.

"Now, Hector, pay attention," he whispered. "We must leave this place. Had it been a pleasant night I should not have come here; but I am too old a man to lie out under the bushes in a storm like this, so I could only take my chances and trust to luck not to be too late. I shall go down the ladder, and if the bloodhound attacks me I shall shoot him. As soon as you hear the shot, come down and run down the road like mad, and make the best of your way to New York, for you will not see me. If, on the contrary, you hear no shot after a minute or two, you will find me at the foot of the ladder; and as to what is

to come next, we shall see what we shall see. Do you understand?"

"Yes," replied Hector, "I understand perfectly; and I have made up my mind to do just as you say."

"Good! Spoken like the sensible fellow I knew you to be. Here goes!"

With wonderful agility, considering his age, Old Blinker flung his legs out of the window and went down the ladder.

The rain was now pouring in torrents and Hector thought he had never seen it so intensely dark.

He listened, but no shot came, no dog barked—there was not a sound.

"Hist! Hist! Come on!" Old Blinker presently called, and Hector joined him at the foot of the ladder.

The detective clutched his arm and drew him away.

"We'll leave the ladder for old fatty to swear at," he breathed; "meanwhile, fancy yourself in the resurrection business and follow me."

What was the old detective up to?

Was he about to rob the grave of its dead?

CHAPTER IX.

GOULISH WORK.

The wind sighed mournfully through the leafless trees in the cemetery, and the rain descended in torrents as the detective paused beside the fence which separated the land of the living from the land of the dead.

"Our work lies on the other side, Hector," he whispered. "I'm too old and too stout to climb over there, so we will have to make a little noise about now. Take this revolver and stand guard. Don't shoot unless you have to, but don't let us get caught, for I am not spoiling my usefulness for the big blue diamond or any other one case under the sun."

Thus saying, Old Blinker produced a small saw and went to work on the palings.

The saw was wonderfully sharp, and cut through the wood as if it had been cheese. There was no alarm, and in a few minutes they were inside the cemetery, moving along under the trees.

"We ought to have the dark-lantern out," muttered the detective, "but I guess we can get along without it. I've studied up the road pretty thoroughly and—yes, here is the path. Now we are all right, my boy."

"I can't see a thing," replied Hector. "I'm sure I hope you know where you are going, for I haven't the faintest idea."

"We are going to Mr. Zollman's grave, of course," snapped Old Blinker.

"You—you don't mean to dig him up!" gasped Hector, whose mind was all in a whirl.

"Well now, you and I would make a pretty fist of getting that coffin out alone on a night like this, wouldn't we?" sneered the detective. "And what in the world would we do with it after we got it up, I'd like to know?"

"But you said—"

"I said we were going to Mr. Zollman's grave and so we are. As for the resurrection business, we will leave that to some one else."

Old Blinker chuckled, and clutching Hector's arm tighter, hurried him on through the rain.

It was useless for Hector to attempt to follow their movements, for when he had passed over the ground before he had been so busy talking with Old Blinker that he had not particularly observed how he went.

The detective seemed to know his way perfectly, however, and after they had covered a considerable distance he announced that they were almost there, and headed to look around.

"I'm just a little bit at sea about the next turning," he whispered. "I'm not sure whether we ought to go to the right or the left, but—ha! See the light! By heaven we are just in time! The ghouls are at their work!"

Through the trees a light had suddenly appeared.

It moved rapidly to the left, close down to the ground and then vanished.

"That's business!" muttered Old Blinker. "Thank heaven I didn't get down to the dark-lantern or we should have been in the soup. I know which way to go now."

It seemed to Hector as if the detective grew more and more talkative as their danger increased.

"Come on! Come on!" he exclaimed, in a nervous whisper. "This business may come into the courts yet, and then we shall be wanted as witnesses. Come on, boy, and let's catch these wretched ghouls at their work!"

They pushed on, the light appearing again as they advanced.

Soon they could hear low voices talking, and the sound of shovelling; at last Old Blinker paused and laying a heavy hand upon Hector's shoulder pointed off among the trees.

"There they are!" he whispered. "There they are! That's your friend, Van Slyk; he who holds the dark-lantern! Now, then, I know who did not steal the big blue diamond, and he is the man!"

There were three men working over the grave which had received the coffin containing the old jeweler's remains.

Two were in the hole, working away with long-handled spades, while Van Slyk stood holding a dark-lantern to light them at their work.

Near by stood a cart with a single horse attached, there were ropes and rollers lying on the ground. Everything was duly prepared for the resurrectionists' work.

"Aren't you going to try to stop this business?" whispered Hector. "If I was to fire a shot they would scatter and we could easily catch Van Slyk."

"Bless your soul, I don't want to catch him!" answered the detective. "That would spoil everything. What I want is to find out what he is driving at and why he is digging the old man up."

"Then you mean to let them carry off the body?"

"I certainly do. Hush, now! They may overhear us and that would spoil all."

Hector silently watched the ghouls at their ghoulish work.

And they worked in equal silence.

Van Slyk occasionally muttered a word of direction and that was all.

Soon the box was uncovered and one of the diggers slipped into the hole and adjusted the ropes.

"Hoist away!" he exclaimed, climbing out again. "Lend a hand here, Matt. We can't do this job alone!"

"Hello! hello!" breathed Old Blinker. "If he calls Van Slyk 'Matt' he must know him pretty well."

Then they saw the box drawn up and put into the wagon.

Hector thought that they would fill up the grave, but they did not. All got aboard the wagon, Van Slyk sitting on the box, and the man who had addressed him as "Matt" drove off in the direction of the Glendale gate.

"After them!" breathed Old Blinker. "We haven't a minute to lose!"

This was right enough, for the wagon was being driven at a rapid pace.

"Have you any idea where they are going?" asked Hector as they hurried along.

"Not the least in the world. Perhaps it is to the hotel," was the reply.

Old Blinker had scarcely spoken when the stillness was suddenly broken by a loud cry:

"Kill him! Kill him if you can't catch him! There he goes!"

"Good heavens!" gasped Old Blinker, "what's up now?"

Something was happening.

Lights flashed among the trees and a number of strange figures in white were seen running, some leaping over the graves as they went.

"Who are they? What are we to do?" gasped Hector.

"Head him off! Head him off!" the voice shouted. "Don't be afraid to shoot!"

Hector and the detective huddled behind a tree, afraid to show themselves; meanwhile the wagon passed on out of sight.

"Great guns, this is more than I bargained for!" gasped Old Blinker. "We must make a dash for that hole in the fence, boy."

"We must do something!" panted Hector.

"We had better separate. You go right into the bushes, that way," replied the detective, pointing; "I'll strike off at an angle. We shall both make the fence, but at different places. Make for the opening, then, and if the coast is clear we can meet at the hotel."

This was spoken very rapidly, and Old Blinker darted off to the left, Hector going to the right.

Both plunged into a tangle of evergreen trees and bushes. It was a part of the cemetery which had been little developed.

Looking back over his shoulder Hector saw, to his horror, that three of the singular forms were following him.

They did not look like men. They were dim and shadowy. He could not get even a glimpse of their faces, they were white from head to foot.

Of course, Hector thought of ghosts as he dashed on, but ghosts flashing lanterns and calling out about shooting were not the regulation kind.

On he ran, hardly knowing which way he went until all at once his feet were on nothing, and down he went into a hole half full of water. He had fallen into an open grave.

"On, boys! On!" a voice shouted then. "I saw him go this way!"

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

Next week: "Jack Wright, the Boy Inventor, and His Electric Flying Machine; or, A Record Trip around the World," by "Noname."

"Why, I didn't know you had weak eyes, Mortimer!" exclaimed his very best girl. "I haven't," returned Mortimer, earnestly. "I have come to ask your father for your hand to-night, and it is a State's prison offense to strike a person wearing glasses in the eye."

[This story commenced in No. 385.]

Tom Smith's Troubles

or,

A GOOD BOY WITH A BAD NAME.

By FRED PEARNOT,

Author of "A Boy of Nerve; or, Ranching In the Wild West."

CHAPTER XXII.

THE FIRM OF JONES & SMITH.

It was remarkable the change that came over Tom Smith after his engagement to Emily Fallon. He held his head up more independently than before, and he was the very quintessence of tireless industry.

Jones remarked that he was the best clerk in the town, and attended more strictly to business than any other young man he ever knew.

Inside of thirty days he raised his salary ten dollars a month, and so faithful was he in his attention to business that the trade of the store rapidly increased. People had confidence in him, but, strange to say, the gossips never let up on him a single day. It had become a habit with them to say something daily about Tom Smith.

On Sundays he dressed as well as any of the young men of the town, and there was many a girl who greatly admired him, but they were among the poorer classes. Not one of them did he visit at her home, but wherever he met them face to face, off went his hat and with it a cheery greeting.

They called him "Tom," but the young ladies of the wealthier families rarely took any notice of him. Emily Fallon and her cousin, Miss Greenway, always bowed and smiled whenever they met. He soon became noted as the politest young man in Arden. He took off his hat to the poorest girl or old woman, and waited on them in the store as though they were all princesses.

Several times a week Emily would drop into the store to leave a little order, and managed to have a little chat with Tom, which, of course, had the effect of putting new life and energy into him.

Some gossip started the rumor that Tom was making the calculation that when he received the thousand dollars which the court had decreed that Mr. Caswell should pay him as damages he would start in business for himself.

"Look here, Tom," said Jones, "we've got a story about you going around that when you get your money out of Caswell you are going to set up in opposition to me. How about that?"

"I never dreamed of such a thing, Mr. Jones. It's my intention, if I ever do get that money, to hand it over to Mr. Baldwin, my lawyer, to take his pay out of it, and I don't know that there will be a dollar of it coming to me, for they say he demands and gets the biggest fees of any lawyer in the county."

"Well, I understood that he wasn't going to charge you anything?"

"Well, he told me so, too; but all the same I'm going to hand it over to him, and tell him to take his fee out of it, if I finally get anything."

"You haven't any doubts about getting it, have you?"

"No. Mr. Baldwin says there's no chance under the sun for him to get out of it. He says, though, that he might possibly get a new trial, and it may run on for a year or two longer. Going to law is a mighty uncertain thing."

"Yes, so it is. It is best for a man to keep out of it."

A month or two after Jones spoke to Tom about the matter, Lawyer Baldwin came into the store, beckoned to Tom to follow him back to the rear, where he said to him:

"Tom, Caswell thinks that he'd better settle the matter, and let the case drop. He says he'll pay five hundred dollars if you'll take that."

"I don't want to do it, Mr. Baldwin; but I will follow your advice in the matter. It isn't the money I'm after so much as it is to punish him, and if I make him pay the whole thousand dollars, so much more satisfaction will I get out of it."

"Well, to tell you the truth, that's just the way I feel about it, too, Tom, and if you say so, I'll tell him that the only way to stop it is to pay the full thousand dollars and all costs up to date."

"All right; do so, then. I'm not at all in need of the money. Mother doesn't owe any debts. She owns her home, and I'm making a good living for her; if he wants to keep it going for ten years he can do so."

Baldwin was built a good deal like Tom. He was as pugnacious as a bulldog, so he went away from the store, and Tom neither saw nor heard from him until a couple of weeks later.

Then he called, and showed Tom a check for one thousand dollars in settlement of his suit for damages.

"I thought it would fetch him," Tom remarked; "and now, Mr. Baldwin, I see it is

made payable to you. I want you to take out just whatever fee you would charge anybody else."

"I don't want a cent of it, my boy. I had an object in offering my services to you, and I've gained it. You take this and let it be a nest-egg, for you have a mother to take care of as well as yourself."

"I can't tell you how grateful I am, Mr. Baldwin, but honestly I think you ought to take half of that, and would feel much better if you would."

"I won't take a cent, Tom, for, really, I think that you and I together have taught a good many people in this town a very wholesome lesson. I'll just endorse on the back of this check, making it payable to you. Then you deposit it in the bank to your own credit," and going to the desk where Mr. Jones kept his books and papers he wrote: "Pay to the order of Thomas Smith," after which he shook his hand and left the store.

"What is it now, Tom?" Jones asked.

"Why, Caswell has given up the fight," and he showed him the check.

"Good! Good! It was a costly bit of business for him, for he had the costs to pay and his lawyer's fees. The whole thing will amount probably to fifteen hundred dollars, all because his wife insisted on his thrashing you. Now, what are you going to do with it?"

"I'm going to put it in the bank."

"Not going to invest it, eh?"

"I don't know what I may do yet."

"Don't you want to go into the grocery business?"

"Well, that's about the only business I know anything about."

"Why not put it into the store here, and we will go into co-partnership, under the name of Jones & Smith?"

"Do you mean that?" Tom asked.

"Of course I do. I'm not in the habit of talking just to hear my voice."

"Wouldn't it hurt your business to take in a bad boy as a partner?"

"No. I'm doing nearly double the amount of business that I did before you set in here with me. It has been growing steadily ever since. You may not know it, but I've been keeping my eye on you all the time, and you are just the sort of a young man I want in business with me."

"Well, I'll talk with mother about it to-night, and if she has no objection I'll accept your offer."

That evening the Widow Smith was made very happy with the story Tom had to tell her.

She advised him to accept Mr. Jones' offer.

"You are only a clerk now, Tom," she said; "but being in business with Mr. Jones will give you a much better standing in the community, and you'll no longer be called a clerk on a small salary."

That's the woman's view of it. She rarely loses sight of the social side of any question.

The next day Tom went to Lawyer Baldwin, told him what he wanted to do, and asked if he would fix up the partnership papers for him.

"Why, of course, my boy. I think you are pursuing a very wise course. I've attended to a good deal of legal business for Mr. Jones, and know he is all right—a square, honest man, who has made his business a success."

The papers were soon drawn up, and announced the co-partnership was made in the morning papers.

People wondered how Tom had met with such good fortune, for none of them suspected that Caswell had surrendered and settled, and all sorts of rumors went flying back and forth.

Some of Jones' friends were bold enough to ask him about it.

"Why, he put in a cool thousand in cash," said Jones.

"The deuce he did! How'd he raise it?"

"He raised it out of Caswell, and if anybody else wants to cowhide him, he's open for an engagement."

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE "BAD BOY" GOES TO THE TOP.

There were a number of people in Arden who were actually in a rage over the fact that young Smith was rising in the community in spite of all their efforts to keep him down—but all his young friends seemed to rejoice with him. The Clays, however, were never heard to utter a word about him. When his name was mentioned in their presence they were silent. They neither said anything against him or for him.

As for the Gurleys, they continued to sneer and turn up their noses when his name was mentioned in their hearing.

As for Mr. Brown, who was the originator of all the bad things that had been said about him for the past five years, he still maintained his hostility. He was careful, though, to say nothing that would give Tom a chance to put the law on him.

He took Caswell's lesson well to heart, for he saw that Tom could get legal backing, and that he was a fighter from away back; but one day a man asked him what he thought of the financial stability of the firm of Jones & Smith, and he said:

"I don't know anything about them, but

in any business transaction you'd better make sure of Jones' responsibility, for I wouldn't trust Smith any farther than I could throw a full-grown bull by the tail."

"What's the matter with Smith?" the other asked.

"Well, in the first place, he is a minor. In the second place, he's been known here for several years as a very bad boy, and that is not the sort of a man I would like to have business dealings with."

It was a very cautious statement, but the man to whom he made it repeated it, and made it a great deal worse than it was, and as a matter of course, like most traveling stories, its worst features grew in bulk, until it finally became a rumor that the firm was in financial straits, and about to fail, and was preparing to swindle its creditors, and all that sort of thing.

Jones heard of it, and was actually dumfounded.

"Why, it's the rankest kind of a lie," he protested. "The firm of Jones & Smith doesn't owe a dollar that it can't pay ten times over with cash or certified check."

When he spoke to Tom about it, the latter remarked:

"Now, Mr. Jones, I want to follow up that rumor, and catch the man face to face that started it."

"Well, it is doing us some hurt, Tom; but you want to be careful, and don't undertake to do as Caswell did, or you might get yourself into a similar trap."

"All right; but I'll expose him, and I'll preach a sermon to him with the tip of my finger against the end of his nose."

"Well, I guess you can't trace it up. It will take up a lot of your time trying to follow a story around this town."

"Oh, it wouldn't do for one of us to undertake it, for the people wouldn't tell us; but we can afford to hire a man; maybe the same detective who caught up with Alex Clay could catch up with this fellow. It might cost us twenty-five dollars, but I think it will be worth more than that to us."

"All right, then; I'll see him," and Jones himself went to the detective and gave him the job.

Inside of a week he had traced it up to Mr. Brown, and he so reported it to Jones.

"But see here, Mr. Jones. The man to whom Brown told it tells a little different story to what you heard. I can't say that he made himself liable except in the simplest expression of his opinion. He said simply that Smith had been known as a bad boy, and he was not the kind of a man he would care to have any business transactions with. It's the constant repeating of a story that develops all the worst features."

"All right," said Jones. "Most stories grow as they travel. But we'll see Mr. Brown about it, all the same."

Tom insisted that he should interview Mr. Brown himself.

"Look here, Tom, no fight, now, unless Mr. Brown strikes the first blow, for you are in a position now where you can be sued for damages."

"Well, I'd be willing to pay Mr. Brown fifty dollars to strike me, for I would make a street cleaner of him in two minutes."

A day or two later Tom, accompanied by a couple of witnesses, went down to the post office, where he had been told that Brown was waiting for the mail to be opened, with quite a number of other citizens.

"Mr. Brown," said he, "there's been an ugly rumor going around Arden that the firm of Jones & Smith was in a shaky financial condition, and that it was unworthy of confidence, and all that sort of thing."

"Well, what have I got to do with that?" Brown asked rather brusquely.

"Well, that's what I am going to tell you."

"I'm not interested in that firm."

"You'd better be interested in what I am going to say to you, and make a certain correction, or I'll give you the worst thrashing of your life right here, sir."

"See here, Smith, I don't want to have anything to do with you."

"Of course you don't. But you've been using my name. You are the starter of that rumor. I hired a man, and paid him twenty-five dollars to trace it up, and now it is right up to you, and you've got to make a satisfactory explanation publicly or take the consequences, not legally, but physically."

Of course the spectators standing around were not only excited, but deeply interested. Naturally they expected a fight. They knew that young Smith had now grown to be a strong, lusty young man, and what other reputation he might have, he was justly entitled to being called a good "scrappier."

Tom told Brown that the story had been traced up to him, but admitted that the worst features of it hadn't come from him, although he had laid the foundation for it.

"You said to a Mr. Conway certain things that were simply your opinion. You stated nothing as a fact, except that young Smith had been known for years as the worst boy in Arden, and that you didn't want to have any financial transactions with any such individual. Now, that's your opinion, and you are entitled to it; but the animus of the thing told to a business man is plainly visible. It was done with the intention of casting a shadow on the finan-

cial standing and business integrity of Jones & Smith. Now, I want you to give your version of that in the presence of these witnesses."

"Well, I did say that you were known as a bad boy, and that was the truth."

"Yes, rumor in this town has been giving me that name for several years, and you were the first man to give it to me; but did you intend by what you said to cast any slur or reflection upon the firm of Jones & Smith in what you said to Mr. Conway?"

"No; I meant nothing of the kind, and I said nothing that could be construed to that effect. I disclaim any responsibility for the report that has been circulated about your firm."

"All right, then. That's all I wanted; but look here, Mr. Brown, I'm going to tell you something for your good. If any more stories come to my ears reflecting upon my good name in any way whatever I intend to hold you personally responsible for it, and if you don't know what that means, you'd better post yourself about it. I'm getting tired of this thing, and it is time you were getting tired of it, too."

"Well, I don't want you to go to making any threats," said Brown.

"All the same I am making them, and if you cast any more reflections upon me I'll hold you personally responsible."

With that Tom walked away, and the next morning the report of the interview was published, and as it wasn't altogether to Brown's liking he had a card in the next morning's issue, which contained a good deal of bluster; but all the same it contained a denial of having said anything that reflected upon Jones & Smith, and that he objected to his name being used in public print by young Smith.

It was conceded that Tom had spoken pretty plainly, if not roughly to Brown, and practically threatened to thrash him, and in the presence of dozen witnesses, at that, and the gossips talked about it. Some nagged Brown or letting the "bad boy" walk over him that way. Brown was very careful to make no remarks that would get him into trouble, but a week later a nephew of his from Abbeville paid him a visit, evidently on invitation.

CHAPTER XXIV.

CONCLUSION.

Brown's nephew was the son of a brother of his, therefore of the same name. He was a brawny, muscular young fellow, about twenty-three years of age, while Tom was now about nineteen and a half years old.

He had been to Arden a few times before, had quite a number of acquaintances there, and in a little while he was in full possession of all the stories the gossips continually kept going.

"So he threatened to thrash uncle, eh?" he remarked. "He may be able to do it, but it won't be when I am around."

"Oh, I guess he thinks he can thrash you," remarked an acquaintance.

"Well, if he thinks so, I'm perfectly willing for him to try it."

Of course what he said was carried to Tom.

"I've nothing to do with him," said Tom. "Don't wish to have anything to do with him; in fact, have no desire to have anything to do with any man of his name in Arden; yet if he wants to have anything to do with me on account of his uncle, he knows where he can find me."

That was repeated to young Brown, and that kind of gossip could have but one effect—a final collision between two hot-headed young men. So one day Brown was passing while Tom was looking at some country produce in a farmer's wagon out in front of the store.

"Say, is your name Smith?" Brown asked him.

"Yes, that's my name."

"Well, are you the one who threatened to thrash any man who has the cheek to say anything about you that you don't like?"

"I don't know that I am; but I'm always ready to protect my good name. If you've got anything against it, spit it out," and Tom turned and faced him, whereupon Brown proceeded to denounce everybody by the name of Smith, in Arden and elsewhere.

"Why, you talk like a fool. There are thousands of Smiths that you know nothing about. Why don't you come right down to the point, and lick me for threatening to thrash your uncle? That's what you came here for."

That rather staggered Brown, and he blurted out:

"No, that's not what I came here for, but I will do it all the same."

"Well, let me tell you that no man named Brown can do that."

Whereupon Brown struck him, and the circus began.

In about thirty seconds they were down on the ground. It wasn't a regular sparring match, by any means, but what is known as a rough-and-tumble fight. Both of them were adepts at that sort of thing, but Tom proved to be the better of the two.

They scarcely struck the ground when Tom threw a handful of sand in Brown's eyes, and completely blinded him, and the way he pummeled him, battered his face,

bulging up both eyes, was quite exciting. People were expecting it, hence none of them interfered.

The town marshal, though, finally came along, and interfered just as Brown acknowledged that he had enough.

"All right," said Tom. "When you want any more come and see me. You'll find me at the old stand, and I'll always be ready to meet any Brown who is a kin to the Browns of Arden. You came here to lick me. I don't know that your uncle sent for you, but I believe it all the same."

"Say, what's this all about?" the marshal asked.

"Oh, I've been thrashing another Brown," said Tom. "It isn't much of a job."

"Well, you know that it is against the law to fight here in the street, don't you?"

"Oh, yes," said Tom; "but I wasn't aware that it was against the law for a man to defend himself when another one hits him."

"That's not for me to decide. I won't make any arrest, but I'll serve notice on both of you that you'll have to appear before the mayor, and let him settle it."

"All right; I'll be there," and Tom went on and made his trade with the farmer.

Brown was sent home in a carriage, and the family physician sent for to use his skill upon him.

"Why, when I went down," said Brown, "the first thing he did was to throw a handful of sand into my eyes; but for that I would have licked him out of his shoes."

"Well, let me tell you," said the doctor, "young Smith is a very bad man for one to tackle, and one should think twice or three times before provoking a fight with him."

"That's all right. I can lick him, and I'm going to do it, if you'll just get this sand out of my eyes."

The physician spent several hours with him, and when he did get the sand out of his optics they were black and blue and badly swollen.

He appeared before the mayor the next morning with a lawyer.

Tom simply had three or four witnesses, who swore as to how the trouble began, and that Brown struck the first blow. The result was that Brown had a fine to pay, while Smith was discharged.

"Say, Smith," said Brown, as they went down onto the street, "you remarked to me yesterday that I could find you at the old stand?"

"Yes, that's what I said."

"Well, what's the matter with meeting me outside of town, where the town marshal won't interfere?"

"Any time you please," said Tom. "Nothing gives me so much pleasure as to teach a Brown a little common sense. I'll meet you out of town any day, except on Saturdays, for that is a very busy day with us at the store, and I'm not willing to sacrifice business just to thrash a Brown. You can have a couple of friends with you, and I'll bring two with me. They are to see that nobody interferes with us."

"It created quite a sensation, of course, but Brown stoutly asserted that Smith was a coward, that he had thrown sand in his eyes for the purpose of getting the advantage of him, and denounced it as a cowardly trick.

"Yes," said Tom, "I threw sand into his face, and when I tackle him again I intend to drive his head in the sand up to his shoulders, so he had better put his eyes into a tin box. It was a rough-and-tumble fight, in which everything is fair. There was no prize ring rules whatever. He came there to lick me, and got licked himself."

A few days later Brown sent word to Tom at the store that he would wait for him out to Ector's mill pond, two miles from town at sunrise the next morning, with two friends, and that if any more came besides the two friends accompanying him it would be without his knowledge or consent.

Tom hurried about to acquaint two of his personal friends, who agreed to go out with him.

They rode out in the grocery delivery wagon, and his mother never suspected what was going to happen.

When they reached the pond they found Brown there with two friends.

"Gentlemen, is this to be a fair fight?" Tom asked.

"Of course it is," replied the other two.

"All right, then. No matter what happens, there is to be no interference. I want Brown searched to see if he has any weapons."

"I have none," said Brown.

"That's all right. You must be searched, or there won't be a fight. I won't believe a Brown on oath. Your friends can search me."

An ugly looking pocket knife was found in Brown's pocket, but no weapon of any kind was found on Smith.

"You see I was right," said Tom. "You can't take a Brown's word for anything."

Tom was evidently trying to work his way up into a rage in which he would lose his self-possession, and he succeeded.

They threw off their coats and went at it, hammer and tongs, and for some two or three minutes the result was in doubt; but finally Tom got in a few blows that knocked Brown out, and he followed it up with a most terrific punishment. He didn't let up until he was pounded into utter unconsciousness.

Then his own friends called a halt, and protested against his striking another blow.

"All right," said Tom. "Do you declare the fight ended?"

"Of course. He is unconscious."

"Well, who won?"

"You did, of course," and Brown's two friends acquiesced in the decision.

Tom then jumped into the delivery wagon, and drove back to the store at a pretty rapid pace.

"What's keeping you so late this morning?" Jones asked.

"Had a little engagement," and Tom explained what it was.

"All right; sorry I wasn't there to see it."

That was a shock to the community, and the women stopped gossiping about Tom Smith, for fear they'd get their male relatives into trouble with him.

They all began to call him Mr. Smith. It was no longer Tom, and he began to receive invitations to social gatherings; but he kept aloof from them all, attending strictly to business; but once or twice a week he managed to see Emily Fallon, who felt proud that she was engaged to a young man who was recognized as the best man physically in the community.

One day the whole town was startled by the announcement that Tom Smith and Emily Fallon were engaged.

Then there were a lot of men and women who looked wise, shook their heads, and remarked:

"I suspected it."

They waited until Tom was twenty-one years old, by which time the business of Jones & Smith was the largest in their line in the whole town, and then they married.

Emily's father built a fine house for them, and to-day there is no man more respected in Arden than Mr. Thomas Smith. He is a wealthy man, one of the most influential in Arden, and he has the unique reputation of having been a good boy with a very bad name.

(THE END.)

You can only read the Fred Fearnott stories by buying "Work and Win."

Wild Animals.

The importation of lions has almost ceased because it is cheaper and easier to breed them in captivity. Formerly an importer of fine lions could calculate upon getting five thousand dollars for a good specimen, but to-day young lions bred in captivity are always a drug in the market. The only demand for imported lions is to keep up the stock in the breeding ones, or for very large, powerful creatures, for it is noticeable that the tendency in the cage breeding is for the animals to degenerate in size and ferocity. Tigers do not take as kindly to the cage life as the lions, and they do not breed so satisfactorily in captivity, and considerable numbers are imported every year. Elephants do not breed well in captivity, not more than two or three ever having been bred in this country; but the importation of these animals is so large that the prices obtained for them have dropped from ten thousand dollars to fifteen and twenty-five hundred each.

Numerous as monkeys are in this country they are not bred here, as they do not breed well in captivity. They are so easily obtained in the country south of us, however, that prices obtained for them are merely nominal, and there is little danger of their immediate extinction. In their native countries they multiply so rapidly that the supply always keeps well up to the demand. Among the highest priced animals of to-day are the rhinoceros. They are quite scarce and they do not breed in captivity. There are probably not more than half a dozen in number in this country; all were bought years ago at good, round sums. Thus the full-grown one in Central Park cost the department seven thousand dollars, and a similar sum was paid for the fine African specimen in the Philadelphia Zoo. The most recent purchase of a rhinoceros was the full-grown one for Barnum's circus, which cost the proprietors seven thousand two hundred and fifty dollars.

The hippopotamus is another extremely rare and expensive creature and sales of these African products are so few that it is difficult to quote a price for them. It is seldom that dealers have a good specimen to sell, and few private circuses could afford to give the prices that would be demanded. The hippopotamus born in Central Park is the only instance of these animals breeding in this country. Had this baby hippopotamus belonged to a private show it would have made a fortune for its owners.

Another New Story will begin in No. 390.

A Little Fun.

Jinks—How much do you think a minister ought to get for marrying a couple? Filkins—Well, if wholly unacquainted with them, perhaps he might be let off with six months.

She—I'm very sorry, Captain Gibbs, but circumstances over which I have no control compel me to say no. Captain Gibbs—May I be allowed to inquire what these circumstances are? She—Yours.

First Mormon—Ah, there goes Elder Graybeard with his two pretty fiancees! Second Mormon—Yes; verily, this a case where "Two are company, three are a crowd" doesn't apply.

Mistress (greatly distressed, as Bridget awkwardly drops the chicken on the floor when about to place it on the table)—Dear me! Now we've lost our dinner! Bridget—Indade, ye've not. Of hov me foot on it! "How still they are!" remarked Mrs. Fogg, apropos of the young couple in the next room. "Yes," replied Colonel F. "It reminds me of my army days. It was always wonderfully quiet just previous to an engagement."

Priscilla (demurely)—He was like lightning, and he was kissing me directly on the lips before I could stop him! Her brother (grimly)—That is a poor simile, Lightning does not strike more than once in the same place!

Mr. Goop—I tell you, Blithersby's wife is a jewel. Mr. Woop—Is that so? Mr. Goop—I should say so. Why, he went fishing yesterday, and came home with an empty jug, a can of salmon and two salt mackerel, and she complimented him on his luck.

Mrs. Frills—Now that I have engaged you, Bridget, I am going to begin right away to give you a little training in the art of waiting on guests. You see, my daughter is coming out next month—Bridget—Indade, mum! An' how long was she sint up for?

Sunday School Teacher—Faith, children, is believing in the existence of something we can see. For example, when you buy bananas, you know that there is a delicious fruit inside the tough skin. Do you understand? Children—Yes, ma'am. Sunday School Teacher—Well, what is faith? Children—Bananas.

Harry and Charlie, aged five and three respectively, have just been seated at the nursery table for dinner. Harry sees there is but one orange on the table and immediately sets up a wail that brings his mother to the scene. "Why, Harry, what are you crying for?" she asks. "Because there ain't any orange for Charlie."

Relics of prehistoric times have been unearthed in a bog at what is known as White Sulphur Springs, two miles north of Afton, I. T., by Prof. W. H. Holmes, head of the bureau of ethnology of the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, and W. A. Gill, a Government photographer. The find includes several large teeth and bones, together with many arrow points and heads. One tooth, that of a mastodon, measured sixteen inches in length and four inches across the top. This is said to be the largest tooth of these extinct animals ever seen by man.

As interesting a steamship as ever visited these ports was the French prison boat Caledonie. She had come to Philadelphia from Cayenne, where she had landed 600 convicts. The cells of the Caledonie are in tiers on her main deck, quite comfortable apartments, twelve by fifteen feet in size, and each containing a cot, a washstand and a chair. Each also contains a coil of steam pipe so arranged that at the first sign of refractoriness steam may be sprayed into every nook and cranny, and the inmates instantly scalped into submission. There has never been among the Caledonie prisoners any occasion for the use of this dreadful weapon, but once. Some years ago the ship was attacked on her arrival at Cayenne by the convicts quartered there. Forthwith a hose was attached to the main boiler, a donkey engine brought into use, and the attacking party was saluted with great streams of water, which was not boiling (for the captain was a merciful man), but which was nevertheless uncomfortably warm. A few drops apiece were enough, and with yells of pain the band of criminals fled in all directions.

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24 Union Square, New York City.

[This story commenced in No. 387.]

A BORN FIREMAN;

OR,

THE YOUNG FOREMAN OF NO. 2.

By ROBERT LENNOX,

Author of "The Reds of Reddington," "Hero Forty-Four," "Quick and Sharp," "Bob, the Bell Boy," etc., etc.

CHAPTER X.

WHAT THE YOUNG FOREMAN FOUND OUT THE
NEXT MORNING.

When Tom found himself falling from the ladder he quickly turned so as to prevent the girl from being hurt. Fortunately for him there were two firemen at the foot of the ladder, who were there to render assistance and prevent accidents, and they succeeded in breaking his fall to a

reached the rear room above the first floor, and the nozzlemen turned the stream on the roof, and the water went pouring off on either side as though a heavy rainstorm was falling.

Arthur Livingston, the foreman, happened to see a fireman coming out of a window with a girl in his arms with a dense volume of smoke reaching out of the window after them, at times completely enveloping him, and the thought struck him

The next morning when the citizens read the account in the paper Tom learned the name of the young lady who he was taking down when he was knocked from the ladder by the stream of water.

It was Ethel Livingston, sister of the foreman of No. 3. It seemed that a little social party of about a dozen young people had met at the residence of Mrs. Swanson, a very wealthy citizen, and they were there when the fire broke out.

It seemed that Jack Crowell had met the reporter and told him how the brilliant genius of No. 3 had turned the hose on Tom and knocked him and a young lady from the ladder; but at the time he didn't know who the young lady was, nor did he find out till he read the paper the next morning.

He didn't see Tom until the next night, for both of them had to go to their work; but all day long the reporters and other citizens were investigating it, and the entire truth came out.

Late in the afternoon the reporter went to the shop where Tom was at work and



AS MORRIS WAS ABOUT TO HURL THE STONE AT TOM HIS RIGHT FOOT SLIPPED AND HE FELL DOWN. QUICK AS A FLASH TOM SPRANG AT HIM, SNATCHED THE STONE UP, WHICH HAD FALLEN TO THE GROUND, AND SMASHED HIM IN THE FACE WITH IT.

that to turn the hose on them would save their lives, so he rushed to the nozzlemen, snatched the nozzle away from him and turned the stream on them.

When he saw that he had knocked them off the ladder, he exclaimed:

"By George, I've saved them!" and turned the nozzle over to the nozzleman again.

When the fire was suppressed Tom and the foreman of No. 1 went through the building, examining every room to see that no fire was creeping about.

Then they went outside and found that the nozzleman of No. 3 was still throwing water on the roof.

"Say, you!" Tom yelled at him. "Why don't you throw your water on the earth? Don't you know that the world is on fire?"

The nozzleman told him to go to blazes.

"I can't do it," said Tom. "We have just put out the blaze. But tell me, are you the fellow who knocked me off the ladder with a stream of water?"

"No. Was that you?"

"Yes, it was me, and if you'll give me your name I'll have a medal struck and sent to you."

"Well, that wasn't me. It was Arthur. He snatched the nozzle out of my hand and turned it on you, thinking you and the young lady were on fire."

"Bless his soul," laughed Tom. "He struck the girl square in the mouth, filled her full of water, and I don't know but that they'll have to pump her out; it tore nearly all the hair off her head. He's a genius, he is."

"Well, don't get fresh," said the nozzleman, "or I'll turn the hose on you myself."

"If you do I'll stand you on your head, and that so quick that you won't know how you got there. Of all blamed idiots that ever threw water, you fellows take the cake," and with that he went out to his engine, joined his boys and returned to their quarters.

It was then past midnight.

talked to him as he was helping his foreman, Mr. Williams.

"Say, Tom," he said, "you had the hose turned on you last night, eh?"

"Yes, for the first time in my life, and I wasn't on fire, either. Hereafter when I run to a fire I'm going to carry a gun in my pocket, for as little as you may think of it, I'd rather be hit by a club in the hands of a giant than by a stream from a Grey-stone fire engine, unless I am at least a hundred feet away from it. We've got a splendid head of water here, and I can tell you that it hits hard. I'll bet any man a month's wages that at a distance of twenty feet I can kill a man with it in three minutes."

"You don't mean that, do you?" the reporter asked.

"Yes, I do. If you tie a man up where he can remain in one spot, I can take the nozzle of No. 2, and at a distance of twenty feet blow his head off with the water inside of three minutes, or bore a hole through his back. Haven't you heard that the constant dripping of water will bore a hole through flint rock?"

"Yes, I've heard that."

"Well, you just let a solid stream, twenty feet from the nozzle, strike a man, and it'll knock him silly in just one second by the watch. I read an account once of how the miners out west used the hose to tear hills and mountains away, and one man with a nozzle with two hundred feet of pressure could tear away more earth in a couple of hours than fifty men can dig away in a whole day. Just think of that idiot turning his hose loose on a man on a ladder, actually blowing him off of it while he was bringing a young lady down from an upper story. I see in your paper this morning that it was his own sister, too. But, of course, he didn't know that. I intend to have a leather medal made and send it to him."

[Continued on page 13.]

[This story commenced in No. 377.]

THE PARSON'S SON;

OR,

THE QUIET SNAPS OF A YOUNG VENTRILOQUIST.

By SAM SMILEY,

Author of "Slammer's School," "Finnegan's Boy," "Billy Brass," "Petey, the Grocer's Boy," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XII.

The Dutchman gave his big shovel an extra push.

The snow had packed tight under his previous pushes.

It could not hold against him forever.

For a moment it hung together just on the edge of the roof.

Then it went all at once.

"Did ye tell him to push the snow on me, nagur?"

"No, sah; don' know nuffin' abo't it. Neber said nuffin'."

Then Pump struggled up through the snow.

"Wor it ye that towld the Dutchman to throw the shnow on me?" cried Mike Duffy, grabbing him.

"No; it was—"

themselves with never a thought of their duties around the house.

There were two pairs of skates between the three and they were making the most of them.

It would be more proper to say that there were four skates, rather than two pairs, as there was only one pair that matched.

Mike Duffy had one of these and Fritz had the other, while Johnson had a couple of misfits.

One was too big, with a big turned-up toe to it, and the other was a woman's skate much too small for him, and having to be bound on with extra straps.

Mike Duffy had on his big fur cap with the flapping ear tips and his big woollen muffler.

Johnson wore a round cap tied on to his head with a big handkerchief, which also kept his ears warm, and he wore gloves that made his hands look like bear's paws, they were so big.

The Dutchman wore a slouched hat, an overcoat too small for him, high-water trousers, big boots, and white yarn mittens, but he was having a good time, despite his funny appearance, and so he did not care.

"

You fellows seem to be having a good time," said Jim, as he and his chums sat on the bank to put on their skates.

"Yah, I bet

me we was," said Fritz, with a broad smile.

"Sure, we are," said Mike, with the air of a man resenting an insult.

"Ah don'

know as we will if yo' fellahs stay 'round," muttered the coon. "Yo'm allus makin' trouble fo' us, yo' is."

"The doctor let you off, I suppose?" said Phil.

"Ah neber did."

"Ye're a liar!"

"No, sah, I isn' a liah."

"Who said yez wor?"

"Yo' did."

"No, sor; but I'll not help yez out," and Mike went off.

"Hi! Hi! Dutch, he'p me o't!" yelled Johnson.

"Excuse me. You was too big once. Off you wait till I pull you out, you shatty dere, don't it?"

"Go chase you'se'f, ol' sourkraut!"

"You bet me I do," said Fritz, getting mad.

"He'p me o't."

"Nein. You was told me to go shase meinselluf, und I do dot putty quick once."

"Neber said nuffin' ob de so't," muttered Johnson, but the Dutchman went away all the same.

Johnson managed to get out by himself after getting to the hard ice, and a more disgusted coon you never saw.

He didn't want any more skating, and he hurried home as fast as he could go, convinced that Mike had played a low-down trick on him, and that Fritz was no friend of his.

He was big and fat and hot blooded, and there was no danger of his doing himself any harm by his cold bath, and so the snap had caused a lot of fun and had hurt no one.

After the disgusted coon had gone the boys did not bother with Fritz and Mike, and the latter went off by themselves and went home.

A couple of days afterward, when things were going along smoothly in school one morning, Jim worked another of his quiet little snaps on Pounder and the rest.

Pump Wardle and his gang were in one of the smaller rooms doing stunts in geography, or some other study which they considered highly unnecessary, and all was as quiet as one could wish.

Suddenly Mike Duffy was heard singing in the hall outside.

Mike never did have a melodious voice,

and no one ever cared to hear him sing,

and least of all in the school buildings.

Everybody looked up, while Mike, apparently, crooned out the following:

"Ya-ha, whisky, ye're me darlin',

Ye're a-leadin' me astray;

Ya-ha, over hills and mountain,

Ya-ha, to Americay.

Ya-ha, ye're nater, ye're swater,

And ye're dacinter than—"

That was all that Pounder could stand of Mike's high-pitched, crack-voiced warbling.

"Michael!" he shouted.

"Yis, sor!"

"Stop that noise."



"I KNOW WHO IT WAS," PIPED UP PUMP WARDLE. "IT WAS JIM WATERS. HE'S A VENTRILOQUIST, AND HE CAN MAKE HIS VOICE SOUND ANYWHERE. HE'S BEEN DOING THOSE KIND OF TRICKS ALL TERM."

PUMP PAUSED, AND A MURMUR AROSE ALL OVER THE ROOM.

Mike Duffy and Pump Wardle were standing near the shed.

Pump was watching Mike.

It had been better for him if he had had less curiosity.

Plunk!

Down came an avalanche right on top of them.

They were buried out of sight in a second.

Then the boys laughed.

"Good boy, Dutch!"

"You ought to bury the coon, too."

"Ach, my gollies, what was der matter already?"

"For goodness sakes, ef he ain't buried de Iishman fo' suah!"

"Yes, and Pump," laughed the boys.

"I was bury der Iishman und der pump?" asked Fritz. "How was dot? I don't understand me dot."

"Hm! Dat's de funnies' ting I eber did saw," roared Johnson. "Dat fool Iishman didn't know ne bettah dan ter stan' raight dere where de hull business done fall on top ob him. Huh! dat am de wust I eber did saw!"

"Yah! Dot was de worstest, I bet me," said Fritz. "Aber you told me I should push dat snow already."

"Me? Neber sayed nuffin' o' de so't," growled Johnson.

Well, Mike and Pump Wardle were buried.

Pump's investigations had proved his ruin.

Mike was the first to emerge from the snow.

He looked like a ghost.

"Phwat the divil are yez doin'? Dutchy?" he asked, shaking his fist. "Do yez want to bury me alive? Sure, yez knew I wor there."

"Ach, my gollies, how I saw you on der roof mit all dot snow? Der nigger mans told me I should push dot, un how I knewed where you was standed?"

"Ye're a liar, it wor not," and Mike grabbed up a double handful of snow.

Pump had his face washed clean for once.

"Ow!" he howled. "You leggo me. I'll tell teacher."

Mike let go of him, and then gave him a kick.

"Av yez hadn't been near me," he said, "it woud not have happened. Ye're the picther av bad luck, so ye are."

Pump knew well enough who had told the Dutchman to push the snow over, but he didn't dare to tell just then and there.

He had sense enough, too, to know that Jim was at the bottom of many others of his mishaps, but he never would have guessed it had it not been for knowing about the young fellow's powers as a ventriloquist.

"Gee! If I dast to tell," he muttered, as he got away, "wouldn't he get a licking? Yes; but so would I. You don't catch me sayin' nothin', but I'm onto that quiet parson's son, all the same."

If Jim had known that Pump Wardle knew of his gifts as a ventriloquist he would have found a way to keep him still, but he did not.

Therefore he went right on working his quiet little snaps, amusing his chums, mystifying his victims, and making no end of a time in the school.

Pump Wardle did not happen to be always present when Jim was at his tricks, and so he could not say very much, and sometimes he was puzzled to tell whether Jim or some one else had spoken.

Three or four days passed, and one afternoon Jim and his usual crowd left the school building together and started for the river to have an hour or two of skating before supper.

On the river they met the three supposed bosses of the school.

They had sneaked away, leaving their work behind them, and were now enjoying

nice lot of bric-a-brac they are, too," laughed Dick.

"Come on, fellahs' neber min' dem loafahs," said Johnson. "We don' hab to ax dem fo' nuffin'!" and away he went with a snort.

"Yah! I bet me day was too fresh already," put in Fritz, skating off on one foot.

"Some brys do be havin' too much to say altogether, I do be thinkin'," said Mike as he glided off on his right foot to which a left skate had been fitted.

"We'll have some fun with those three jays yet," thought Jim, but he said nothing.

Well, the boys lost no time in getting on their skates, and they were soon flying down the river having no end of a good time.

They passed the three cronies and gave them a hail, and soon after Jim, who was to one side at some little distance from the rest, passed over a stretch of ice which was a bit ticklish.

Jim was not very heavy, but all the same he felt the ice bend under him as he skinned over it.

It did not crack but he knew that if a heavier fellow went over it there would be some fun.

He took a turn around the ticklish place, made a mark or two that would locate it for him, and then joined his chums.

After a spin they came back and found the three indispensables skating near the thin place in blissful ignorance of the possible dangers looking there.

They stopped, and Jim said:

"Let's watch these gillies. They're doing some fine work, aren't they?"

"So they are, I don't think," said Tom, as Mike Duffy went around in a circle on one foot, his arms flying and his ear flaps bobbing up and down in the wind.

"Oh, Mike is a fine skater," said Jim, as the Irishman came around his way.

"Faith, I am, thot," said Mike, pausing.

"Who says I'm not?"

"Nobody," said Jim. "You're a regular peach on skates."

"Day Fishman cyant beat me," said Johnson. "Yo' watch me."

Mike had turned, but he seemed to say:

"Give me a shtart, nagur, and I'll bate ye to the big tree."

"A'right," said the coon.

"The nigger is after you to snap the whip with you, Mike," whispered Jim.

"Get a move on you."

"Faith, he won't do it, then," said Mike, as he started off.

"Come on, nagur, and I'll bate the head aff ye," he seemed to call back.

That put Johnson on his mettle.

It was a good half mile to the big tree, and the idea that a man with one skate could beat one with two with only a little start made him laugh.

He struck out, and taking the most direct line, headed for the soft spot.

He was well upon it when the ice dipped like a bowl, and then collapsed all around him.

There was a crack, a smash and a splash, and then the big coon went down in four feet of water.

"Ha, ha, ha! Thot's the toime I fooled yez," Johnson thought he heard the fleeing Mike say.

"My gollies, yust look at dot!" cried Fritz.

The boys set up a howl and Mike turned around to see what it meant.

He struck a rough place in the ice, landed all in a heap, and then, sitting up, saw Johnson in the water.

"Aha! Would yez luck at the nagur?" he cried.

"Hi! Hi! He'p me o't!" shouted Johnson.

"Dat am you' fault, Iish."

"How is it me fault?" asked Mike, coming up.

"Yo' got me to cross dat yere sof' spot."

"Faith, I niver."

"Yas, yo' did. Yo' axed me to race yo' an' knowned I'd go dat a way."

"I said nothin' about racin' yez," protested Mike.

"Yas, yo' did; yo' sayed yo'd beat me to de big tree."

"I tell yez I did not."

"Yo'm a big Iish liah."

"Phwat's that?" growled Mike.

"He'p me o't."

"Deed, an' I'll not, afther yez callin' me a liar like that."

"Ah neber did."

"Ye're a liar!"

"No, sah, I isn' a liah."

"Who said yez wor?"

"Yo' did."

"No, sor; but I'll not help yez out," and Mike went off.

"Hi! Hi! Dutch, he'p me o't!" yelled Johnson.

"Excuse me. You was too big once. Off you wait till I pull you out, you shatty dere, don't it?"

"Go chase you'se'f, ol' sourkraut!"

"You bet me I do," said Fritz, getting mad.

"He'p me o't."

"Nein. You was told me to go shase meinselluf, und I do dot putty quick once."

"Neber said nuffin' ob de so't," muttered Johnson, but the Dutchman went away all the same.

Johnson managed to get out by himself after getting to the hard ice, and a more disgusted coon you never saw.

He didn't want any more skating, and he hurried home as fast as he could go, convinced that Mike had played a low-down trick on him, and that Fritz was no friend of his.

He was big and fat and hot blooded, and there was no danger of his doing himself any harm by his cold bath, and so the snap had caused a lot of fun and had hurt no one.

After the disgusted coon had gone the boys did not bother with Fritz and Mike, and the latter went off by themselves and went home.

A couple of days afterward, when things were going along smoothly in school one morning, Jim worked another of his quiet little snaps on Pounder and the rest.

Pump Wardle and his gang were in one of the smaller rooms doing stunts in geography, or some other study which they considered highly unnecessary, and all was as quiet as one could wish.

Suddenly Mike Duffy was heard singing in the hall outside.

Mike never did have a melodious voice,

and no one ever cared to hear him sing,

and least of all in the school buildings.

Everybody looked up, while Mike, apparently, crooned out the following:

"Ya-ha, whisky, ye're me darlin',

Ye're a-leadin' me astray;

Ya-ha, over hills and mountain,

Ya-ha, to Americay.

Ya-ha, ye're nater, ye're swater,

And ye're dacinter than—"

That was all that Pounder could stand of Mike's high-pitched, crack-voiced warbling.

"Michael!" he shouted.

"Yis, sor!"

"Stop that noise."

"It's no n'ise I do be makin', sor," Mike's voice answered promptly, while the boys tittered.

"What do you call it, then?" asked Pounder, screwing his face into a knot and glaring at the door over his big nose.

"Sure, it's the illigant singin' I wor givin' ye, sor."

"Well, stop it," said Pounder peremptorily.

"Aha! It's no taste yez have," was the answer, and the singing dwindled away into nothing.

Things were quiet again, when all of a sudden the coon's voice was heard in the hall outside singing in very crazy rag-time:

"Alla coonsa looka alikea toa me,
I'vea gote anothera feller, do you see?
And he'sa just as good to me,
Asa you, Mistah Coon, evah dared to be;
He spenda all hisa moneya free,
You and I coulda nevah—"

The boys were listening and laughing at the rich pork-chop tones of the dusky warbler, when Pounder brought down his ruler with a bang.

"Johnson!" he snorted.

"Yas'r!" came the coon's tones, as natural as could be, and no one not in the secret could have told that they were not listening to the genuine article.

"Stop that disturbance this instant."

"Ah isn't makin' no 'sturbance," growled the coon.

"What is it, then, I'd like to know?" and Pounder looked wrathful.

"Dat's real African op'r'a, dat is. Didn' yo' know dat, boss?"

"Well, stop it, anyhow. This is no opera house."

"No, sah, it am a crazy house, dat's what it am."

"Johnson?"

"Yas'r."

"Go to work."

"Don' have ter," came in sassy nigger tones, and then the singing was resumed, growing fainter and fainter, till at last it could not be heard.

"Well, I declare!" said the doctor.

"Most extraordinary!" put in Nailer.

Things had only just quieted down, when Fritz was heard yodeling just outside:

"Oh, where, oh, where was my little dog gone,
Hilli-o-yeo-hi-o,

Mit his tail cut short, und his nose gone wrong;

Oh, where, oh, where, was my little dog gone,
Hilli-hi, hi, koodle-i-oodle,

Mit his tail—"

You never heard such warbling in all your days.

The boys were simply convulsed, but Pounder was mad.

"Fritz!" he yelled, pounding on his desk.

"What you was want?"

"Stop that singing."

"I didn't was singing yet."

The boys chuckled, and Pounder got up.

"Well, stop it, anyhow."

"Ach! Go shased yourself!"

"What's that?" and the doctor's hair fair-ly stood on end.

"Go sit on a tack once. You was too fresh."

"Well, well, I declare!"

Then Fritz was heard singing again, if you could call it that.

"Professor, go drive that man away, and tell him I'll discharge him if I hear any more of his noise."

Nailer started for the door, and upset Pump Wardle coming in.

Behind him were his schoolmates and Rounds.

"Hello! What's the matter?"

"Did you meet Fritz?"

"No."

"You haven't seen him?"

"No."

"Why, he was outside not half a minute ago singing, and the doctor told me to go and speak to him."

"Haven't seen him, or any one else. What would he be doing in the house at this time, anyhow?"

"You say he was not there, Mr. Rounds?" asked Pounder, who had heard this talk.

"No, sir; he was not."

"It's very singular. I don't see how he could get away so quick. Why, just before you came in he was out there sing-ing."

"I heard the singing, if you could call it that, sir, but it sounded in here."

"There's Fritz now," said Nailer, who was at the window, "coming up the road in a wagon. He could not have been here at all."

"But you heard him as well as I did," said Pounder, in great astonishment. "How can you say that, Professor?"

Then Pump Wardle piped up, being un-able to hold in any longer.

"I know who it was. It was Jim Waters. He's a ventriloquist, and can talk like any-body and make his voice come anywhere. He's been doing them kind of tricks all the term."

Pump paused for breath, and a murmur arose all over the room.

It was as if a bombshell had suddenly

fallen among the boys to hear Pump's ex-planation.

Jim's cronies wondered how he had found it out, but Jim showed no anxiety, and sat there as quiet and as innocent looking as ever.

"You ask him," Pump went on. "I heard 'em talkin' about it the other day, him and his gang, and they didn't know I was around. Hm! You can't keep anything from me, you can't."

"How long have you known this, War-dle?"

"All along—a week."

"And you did not come and tell me?"

"And have them fellers lick me?" mut-tered Pump. "Not much, I didn't."

"Waters," said the doctor, "is this true?"

"Yes, sir."

"And you are a ventriloquist?"

"Yes, sir."

"And you have been amusing yourself and your friends at our expense all these weeks?"

"The boys didn't know it till a week ago, Doctor, so you mustn't blame them."

"Huh! Then that accounts for the strange things that I and others have been accused of doing. Was it you singing just now, imitating Johnson and Michael?"

"Yes, sir."

"Hm! Do it again. Professor, go in the ball and look."

Then Jim repeated his performance, while Pounder, who had his eyes on the boy all the while, could not detect the faintest motion of his lips.

"Dear me! Any one out there, Pro-fessor?"

"No, sir; only me."

"Hm!" said Pounder again.

Then he scratched his head, looked puz-pled, wrinkled his face, and finally said:

"Waters, you are too talented to stay in this school. You ought to be on the stage, though I suppose your father would ob-ject. You have been a studious boy, and I never heard of your breaking any of the school rules, and so I won't expel you, but will ask you to go to some other school where your talents as a ventriloquist will be appreciated more than they are here."

"Very well, sir," said Jim, and that set-tled it.

He went away, and the boys all missed him, and Pump Wardle was sorry for many a day that he had let the cat out of the bag, for every one of Jim's particular cronies gave him one of the worst lickings he had ever had.

Well, Jim has left the school, and gone somewhere else, but when we locate him it is very likely that our readers will hear once more from that quiet young ventrilo-quist, THE PARSON'S SON.

[THE END.]

Old and Young King Brady, the great Detectives, appear every week in "Secret Service."

TRYING TO FIND YOUR WAY.

By "ED."

How many of my readers—I believe there are several left yet outside of the lunatic asylum—have arrived at a town in active search of somebody who lives there, but whether he lives upon the inskirts or the outskirts or the over-skirts they really don't know.

Those of you who have been there—most of you have, I guess—will appreciate the position in which I was placed a few days ago.

In search of a friend of mine, I arrived just about noon in quite a large town in New Jersey—State of red mud and mos-quitos, railroads and liquid lightning.

I got off the train and approached the station-master, who was having it hot and heavy with a barrel of flour, which he was trying to steer into the freight house.

"Beg pardon, Marquis," I said, "but do you know where Mr. Skivers lives?"

He ceased trying to knock the flour barrel out.

"Who?" he asked.

"Mr. Skivers?"

"Young fellow?"

"Yes."

"Red hair?"

"Cardinal."

"Stout?"

"Yes."

"Mustache?"

"Mustache or dirt—I ain't sure."

"Great smoker?"

"Yes; that is the reason I didn't bring my cigars. You know him?"

"Yes—at least I did."

"Why don't you now?"

"Because he's dead. Fell through a hay-rigging a year ago. Broke both lungs."

I said, sorrowfully, that I did not want that Skivers. I had not arrived to un-earth corpses. The Skivers I was after was alive and well.

"What is his first name?" queried the agent.

"Timothy."

"Don't know him. Know Timothy Brown, though. He lives down two blocks

—little red house. Maybe you want him?"

"Nixey."

"Then go over to the hotel. Maybe Dick behind the bar knows," and the agent pro-ceeded to resume his affray with the barrel.

I thanked him, and went to the hotel, the most prominent features of which were the week's washing floating in the breeze from the piazza which encircled the house, and the horse-trough, at which a mule driven by a half-asleep darky was trying to kill himself by drink.

I found Dick at the bar.

He did not wear a collar, but presented evidences of civilization in the shape of a paste-diamond pin as big as your fist, and as excessively brilliant as a lump of putty dropped in cold-dust.

"Good-day, sir," said he. "What can I do for you?"

"Cigar first," answered I. "Next, in-formation."

I got the cigar.

It was a New Jersey cigar.

New Jersey cigars are made to encourage the match industry. They are formed of cement and India rubber, and cast in an iron foundry. It takes three boxes of matches to light one.

"Now," I said, as I tried to puff away at the cigar and make believe I liked it, "do you know Timothy Skivers?"

"Old John Skivers' son?"

"Yes."

"Of course I do."

"Where does he live?"

Dick scratched his head.

"Blamed if you ain't got me now," he exclaimed. "But the old man could tell you, I suppose."

At last I had a clew.

"Know where the old man lives?" I asked.

"Oh, yes."

"Where?"

"Colorado, I think; though Andy Jones did let on something about him having removed to New Mexico. Left here a year ago."

Grimly I stalked out, crushed again.

I wandered aimlessly out into the street. The usual town loafer, with his usual cigar and usual spit-freckled pavement in front of him, stood gazing languidly upon the corner at nothing at all.

I braced him.

"Are you acquainted with Tim Skivers, cully?" interrogated I.

He sized me up.

"Nice pin you've got," irreverently said he.

"Yes."

"How much?"

"A dollar."

"You're a Yorker?"

"I am."

"Know Patsy Cuff?"

"No."

"Funny. Thought all Yorkers knew Pat-sy. Bully lad. Does the singing for a clam wagon. And say!"

"Well?"

"Is that the last style of hat?"

"The latest."

"Don't like it. It's tart. Got a tooth-pick 'bout you?"

His questioning was growing monotonous. It was eating me, so I finally asked: "Do you, or don't you, know where Tim Skivers resides?"

Placidly he replied, as he first whistled at a dog across the street: "Never heard of his nibbs."

I floated away.

And when I traversed about half a block, I heard him call after me:

"If I was you I'd put an extension upon that seemoor coat. The patches on your pants give you dead away."

I made no reply, however, but kept on till I fell in with an angel who was sawing wood outside of a house.

I put my old query:

"Know Tim Skivers?"

"Young Tim?"

"Yes."

"Course I do."

"Where does he live?"

He ceased sawing.

"See that white house?" and he pointed it out.

"I do."

"Go right down the street for two blocks, take the footpath across the lumber yard, turn to your left past the soap factory, cut across the vacant lot till you come to the iron works, then go straight ahead. It's got a horse-block in front of the door; you can't miss it."

I said I hoped not, and staggered on.

I got bounced through the lumber yard by the watchman, fell over the boxes in front of the soap factory, had to flee for dear life from a belligerent goat in the vacant lot, and at the iron foundry a bulldog came out and tasted my leg. Oh, I enjoyed myself.

But I found the house.

A Hibernian slave was digging potatoes in the garden, and I called to him:

"This Mr. Skivers?" I asked.

"Yis, sur."

"Is he in?"

"No, sur."

"Where is he?"

"At the blacksmith shop."

Now, I didn't know any more where the blacksmith's shop was than I do of the

whereabouts of the Holy Grail. So I char-tered a small boy for five cents to show me.

Mr. Skivers was not at the blacksmith shop.

He had gone to the grocery.

At the grocery he had gone to the bar-ber's shop.

There I found—

Not my Timothy Skivers, but another one, his cousin.

I explained the state of the case to the wrong Timothy, and he told me where to find the right Timothy, about three miles away, at the other end of the town.

I had to foot it, because the town only had one public hack, and that was away at a funeral.

Footsore, dusty and mad enough to bite a telegraph wire, I arrived at last at my friend's house.

To meet his sister, who sweetly said:

"Come to see Tim?"

"Yes."

"I'm so sorry."

"About what?"

"He waited till he thought you were not coming; then he went fishing. I'm afraid he won't be back till long after dark. Won't you come in and rest a while?"

[This story commenced in NO. 386.]

NED NERVE,

The Boy Engineer,</h3

short tunnel, and approach Danbury from the north. In doing so we will strike Lake City and a dozen other towns. We will reach Danbury by a nearer route, quicker time and travel a thicker settled region."

The plan was carefully examined.

"Why, it is a capital route," said Mr. Forbes. "But why has nobody thought of it before? Why was not the original survey of the D. & R. made over this route?"

"That is easily explained," said Mr. May. "When the D. & R. was built Lake City was not in existence. Danbury and Ralston were the two big centres."

"It looks to me like a better paying route than the D. & R. ever could be," said Mr. Read.

"So it will be," declared Ned. "It will pay to build it. I feel sure it will frighten Percival into the sale of his interest in D. & R."

"But why bother with Percival at all?" said Forbes. "Why not leave him out of it entirely?"

"It would be his just deserts," said Read. "We could drive him to the wall. I am sure the country would unite in boycotting Percival's road."

"That is the idea," said Ned. "In fact, I see in the plan the only salvation for Ralston. As it is, Percival owns D. & R. and will be a demagogue. The merchants of Ralston will be at his mercy. You will see freight rates go skyward."

"They are as high now as we can stand," said Forbes.

"Of course they are; but while Mr. May had charge of the road you found no fault."

"Not the slightest."

"Very good! Mr. May shall be the superintendent of this new road, if he will take the position."

The committee stared at Ned.

"So you really think it possible to get the money, do you, Ned?" asked Mr. May. "I have it already, I tell you."

The committee looked helpless. It seemed impossible for them to believe this remarkable statement.

"Ned," said Mr. May, "you will pardon us for our conduct, but, we have all known you from boyhood; aye, from infancy up. We know that you are an orphan, a waif of a railroad wreck. We know that the family who reared you are in humble circumstances. We like you and we respect you for all this, but where have you procured a million dollars with which to build this railroad? Do not trifile."

"Mr. May," said Ned, quietly, "you have never known me to play a false part?" •

"Never!"

"Very good! Then you and your colleagues must treat me in absolute faith and confidence. You will see it all plainly some day. If you will organize the Lake City and Ralston Railroad Company, I will undertake the contract to build and equip it and take my pay in capital stock of the company or mortgage bonds. Here and now I will show you a forfeit which I will deposit to your credit as a security bond in any bank in Ralston, that I will carry out my contract."

Ned drew from his pocket a paper and laid it on the table.

The astounded committee examined it. It was a certified check on a Chicago bank for one hundred thousand dollars. There was no doubt of its genuineness.

"Well, I am dumfounded!" exclaimed Mr. May. "Ned, what does this mean? You are not Monte Cristo, are you?"

The young engineer laughed.

"Now is all doubt removed?" he asked.

"Yes; but the mystery remains," said Forbes. "We will not be so personal as to ask you where you got this money, Ned."

"I do not care to state at present," said the young engineer.

"Very well," said Mr. May. "We will accept your generous offer, Ned. The Lake City company shall be organized at once. I am sure this will create a stir."

"There is one stipulation."

"What?"

"I am to have charge of the construction."

"That will be your right."

The report spread like wildfire through the town that Ralston was to have a new railroad, and that Ned Nerve, the young engineer, had become a millionaire.

All else was mystery.

Percival would not believe it. He declared that it was a bluff. But Ned's forfeit bond was found to be absolutely good, and this created an impression.

"Somebody has been fool enough to back the young cub," chuckled Percival. "You'll see how they'll sink their money."

To encompass this the scheming old villain laid his plans. He advertised to this effect:

"All employees of the D. & R. are hereby notified that the old standard of wages is this day resumed, and former employees will be taken back. Trains will run as per schedule, hereafter."

"Per order,

"LUKE PERCIVAL, President."

This created but little interest. A few of the old hands went back. New ones were employed.

And trains began once more to run over the D. & R. President Percival sat in his

office and tried to flatter himself that he had the inside track.

"Let them build their new road," he declared. "Their money is sunk. I'll put rates to a figure which they can't touch."

But, for all this, in his secret heart Luke Percival felt the power of a mysterious fate working against him.

CHAPTER XVII.

A DARK PLOT.

Business with the D. & R. was almost at a standstill. There was very little traffic over the line.

No merchant, except under the most pressing necessity, would ship freight over Percival's road.

It was almost a boycott.

In the meanwhile the Lake City road had quickly secured its charter, and construction was begun.

Thousands of workmen were employed. Like magic the ballast was laid and the rails went down.

The road was not a long one, being hardly twenty-five miles. But it was a link between Ralston and the great Pacific line.

So its stock was assured of a par value on the start. In fact, overtures were at once made by the Pacific to absorb the new road into its system.

But Ned declined.

"This road shall be an investment for the people of Ralston," he said. "The shares are limited, and rich dividends will be paid. There will be no watering of stock."

It was a wonder to the people where the money came from which built the new road. Percival stood back, gnawing his fingers.

The predicted slump for which he looked did not materialize.

And as the completion of the road became an assured fact he began to grow alarmed.

Not since the abduction of Alice May had Jack Percival been seen or heard from.

The young reprobate had kept completely out of sight. There was a warrant out for his arrest, but he could not be found.

One day, however, just as the last mile of road into Ralston was being laid, a seedy-looking man crept up the D. & R. track and entered the depot.

It seemed to be his desire to avoid notice. He made his way up the stairs and to Percival's office.

As he entered not a clerk in the place knew him.

"Where is the governor?" he asked. Then a sharp cry went up from one of the clerks. He was recognized.

"Is that you, Mr. Jack?"

"Yes, it's me!" growled the young snob. "Is there anything funny about it? I've got tired of sleeping in freight cars and sheds, and I want a show to live. Tell the governor I want him."

"Your father is in the private office." Young Percival kicked open the door and entered.

Luke Percival started up agast.

"Jack!" he gasped.

"Yes, it's Jack, your handsome son," said the young snob. "You don't want to know me, do you? Well, I've learned something since I left home."

"Are you drunk?" "Drunk? I wish I was. If I had the money I'd be drunk in an hour. What are you looking at me that way for? Ain't I your son? You've got to do something for me, dad?"

"Where have you been?" "Oh, don't ask me."

"Well, you are a sight! What do you want me to do for you?"

"Take me back. Give me some money and some clothes. Confound it! You've got power enough to get me out of this scrape."

"Look out! If you are seen in the town they may lynch you!"

"Well, why don't they lynch you, then? You were in it just as much as me. Pretty state of affairs when I have to stand the whole gauntlet to let you out."

"Say, Jack, don't make a fool of yourself. I didn't know what became of you."

"Nor didn't care!"

"Talk sense. You know you've got to keep low. But I'll look out for you."

"Oh, you will?"

"Yes."

"What's the news?"

"Haven't you heard? That young cub, Ned Nerve, has become a millionaire."

Jack Percival gave a gasp.

"A—millionaire?"

"Yes."

"That's a joke."

"No, it's true."

"Why—how does that happen? He was a pauper. Where'd it come from?"

"That is the mystery."

"What is he doing with his money?"

"Building a railroad."

Jack Percival nearly fell out of his chair. He stared at his parent.

"A railroad? Oh, say, governor, you're gone daft! What is he building a railroad for?"

"To put me in a hole. And by the great ghosts," exclaimed Percival, desperately, "it looks as if he would, too!"

"What—how the deuce—he can't do it, can he?"

"Yes, he can. You see, we have to add twenty miles to our haul by going over the loop. He saves all this by a direct cut to Lake City."

"Lake City!" ejaculated young Percival. "Well, all this is news. I suppose he's engaged to Alice May, now."

"It is likely."

"Curse him! I'd like to twist his windpipe! I say, governor, I'm ready for anything. I'd just as soon end my life in State's prison as anywhere. Give me a tip how I can do him a dirty turn."

An odd light shone in Percival's eyes. He arose and thrusting his hands in his pockets, paced the floor.

They were an ill-assorted pair, this father and son.

Each was cold and heartless, and personally ambitious. Neither had a spark of love for any other being, or compassion, either, for that.

In that moment Luke Percival was reflecting how he could use his erring son to defeat Ned Nerve. He would not hesitate a moment to sacrifice him. Suddenly he said:

"Of course I do."

"Well, if he could be got onto a train on our road—and that train could be sent to Hades over the loop—or somehow—you are shrewd! How can it be done?"

For a full minute the two looked at each other.

There was a murderous light in Jack Percival's eyes. Finally he said:

"I have it! Listen!"

Together they conferred in whispers. When they had done, Jack danced a jig on the office floor. Luke Percival chuckled in his most deliberate way.

"We'll fix him, dad!" said Jack. "Now, remember, I'm to be telegraph operator at Smith's Bridge, just the other side of the loop. That is all straight?"

"Yes."

"All right. We'll win!"

Jack Percival disappeared as mysterious as he had come. The clerks in the office were enjoined to silence.

Then carefully the plot against Ned Nerve was laid. The next day Ned received a dainty note worded as follows:

"Dear Ned—I am called to Danbury to see my sick aunt. I don't like to travel over Percival's railroad, but papa thinks it will be all right for this once. At least, it is necessary. I will see you on my return. Yours ever,

"ALICE MAY."

Ned felt a little thrill of wonderment. He did not quite like the thought of her taking a trip over Percival's railroad, but she said it was a necessity.

So he resigned himself. But in the same mail was another letter—a fatal one.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE VICTIM OF TREACHERY.

The second letter gave Ned food for deep reflection. Thus it read:

"To Mr. Ned Nerve:

"My dear sir—I have found reason to reconsider my course toward you in the past. I must see you upon a matter more important to you than to any one else. Drop into my office at eleven o'clock. Do not fail to come at that hour.

"Yours respectfully,

"LUKE PERCIVAL."

For the life of him Ned was unable to understand this letter. He would have showed it to Mr. May, but Mr. May was at Lake City.

"Well," mused the young engineer, "I see no harm in acceding to the request. I will call on Mr. Percival."

The more he thought of it the deeper grew the young engineer's wonderment. What could Percival want?

But at the hour named he applied at the magnate's office. As Ned entered, Percival arose with a manner of great agitation.

"Ah, my young friend!" he said. "I am glad you have come. I had feared you would disregard my request. After my treatment of you in the past, I am sure you could not have been blamed."

"The tenor of your note left me no alternative," said Ned.

"I had hoped that it would. Of course, you have guessed the object?"

"To the contrary, I have not."

"Ah, well, I must make it plain. I need not tell you that I have bitterly repented of my conduct. I can see that your new railroad is bound to be a great success."

"We hope it will."

"I am sure of it. Now, Ned, perhaps you can never feel friendly toward me again, but I am going to do all I can to atone for the past."

Ned was astonished. This was a change of front most unexpected. He instinctively looked for an ulterior motive.

"Pray don't misjudge me, Ned; I am sincere."

"I will so consider it."

"We cannot afford to be enemies. Of course, you are in a position now to ruin me."

"I have no desire to do so."

"I believe you. On the other hand, I

have determined to atone for all the wrongs I have ever done you. I am going to leave Ralston forever."

Ned gave a start.

"Yes, forever! What is more, I am going to place the D. & R. road in your hands. If you wish to buy it, it is yours at par. If not, I will lease it to you, unconditionally. I am going to Europe to spend the rest of my life."

It was an offer which instantly struck Ned as advantageous and extremely fair. The consolidation of the two roads would assure the future of Ralston.

"Do you mean that, Mr. Percival?"

"I do."

"Well, I will lease your road with the option of purchase. Is the rolling stock in good condition?"

"Come down to the yard and see."

Ned followed the magnate down to the railroad yard and into the car shops. Then they went around to the roundhouse.

They were looking over the locomotives when suddenly a messenger entered the shop. He went up to Mr. Percival.

"A message for you, sir," he said.

"A message?"

"Yes, sir."

The magnate glanced over it hastily. Then he said:

"Get out your best engine and a crew. Make the run for it."

"I haven't three men in the yard. There isn't an engineer in the roundhouse. If an engine should start now there would be just time to do it."

Ned could think of nothing but the horror of the train going into Smith's Bridge. It would be awful!

The young engineer's veins tingled. Human life was at stake. Forgotten was all that in that moment.

"Give me Ninety-Four!" cried Ned. "Steam is up on her! Where is the stoker? I will go down to flag that train!"

"You?"

"Yes, if you will give me permission."

"But—stop and think. Ned! You are no longer an engineer—your—position—"

"No; but I am a man—and life is first of all!" cried Ned. "Give me a man and I'm off!"

"Then go, and God bless you!" cried Percival, with a hypocritical wail. "Here is a stoker! Come here, Jim Caldwell!"

The stoker came up hastily.

"What is it, sir?"

"Get aboard this engine. You are to keep her hot. You've got the best engineer in the West for a mate."

"That's what I want!" cried the stoker, leaping into the cab. "I'll hold my end up!"

Ned followed him.

Percival ran down and opened the switch with his own hands. The locomotive glided out onto the main line.

"Keep the line clear!" shouted Ned.

"Aye, I will!" replied Percival.

Then away went Ninety-Four. It was like old times to Ned. He leaned out of the cab window and glanced ahead, down the familiar line of track.

It was midday, and the run seemed easier. Ned's runs had mostly been at night. He piled on the steam.

Ninety-Four was a good engine. She responded most nobly.

Soon she was flying down the steel highway like a ghost. Her sides fairly throbbed with her mighty efforts and her pistons went so fast as to be almost invisible.

Ninety-Four gave a leap, buckled and caught Caldwell beneath the tender. He was crushed to a jelly.

Then the locomotive rolled down a forty-foot embankment. Ned Nerve, bruised and unconscious, was jammed into the top of the cab.

And there he lay, insensible for many minutes. All this while Jack Percival was heavily getting a hand-car on the track, some distance above.

The young villain had not sufficient nerve to go down and see what was the result. He could only think of getting away from the spot as soon as possible.

But at the moment it chanced that a couple of hunters were on the opposite side of the ravine.

They saw the accident and took in the situation at a glance.

"It's a put-up job, Ike!" said Sam McClurey to Ike Patterson. "And that young devil Percival is at the bottom of it. See? He's trying to get away!"

"Let's stop him! I'll bet the men on that engine were killed!"

"I'll go you!"

So down rushed the hunters. Patterson covered Percival with his gun.

"Hold on, you train-wrecking devil!" cried the hunter. "I've caught ye! I'll blow your head off if you move!"

"I didn't do it!" whined the young villain. "I'm going for help."

"Help is right here, and you're needed. Come along, and if you try to run we'll shoot you dead!"

So Percival was obliged to accompany the two hunters. Down the bank they climbed. The first thing they saw was the mangled body of Caldwell.

"Jim Caldwell!" cried Patterson. "He's dead, too! This is murder!"

"Hello! Here's another. It's the engineer. By the cattymounts, Ike, it's Ned Nerve!"

"Is he dead?"

"I dunno! No, he's alive; help me git him out, partner!"

Ned's senseless form was with difficulty extricated from the top of the cab. He was carried up the bank to the hand-car. Jack Percival stood by, with chattering teeth.

He kept repeatedly denying that he had derailed the locomotive.

"Shut up, you young scamp!" cried Ike Patterson. "You can't fool us. How is he coming to, Sam?"

"I've got him, all right!" declared the other hunter, who had been giving Ned whisky from a flask.

In a moment the young engineer opened his eyes. He looked up into the faces above him and gradually a recollection of all came back to him.

"Where—where is Caldwell?" were his first words. "Was he killed? Poor Jim!"

"There, there," said Patterson, soothingly; "it can't be helped now. You did all you could. You have reason to be thankful that you are living."

Ned was uninjured, save for a stunning blow on the head and a few bruises. He was a trifle weak for some moments, but the whisky revived him and he was soon able to get on his feet.

Then he saw the blanched face and towering figure of Jack Percival. Ned's whole being was afire with righteous wrath.

"You hound!" he cried, forcibly. "This is your work! You meant to kill me, but murdered another instead. What will you do now to atone for this?"

Jack Percival was the picture of abject terror. He wrung his hands wildly.

"Oh, Ned, forgive me! It was not my work! I was made to do it!"

"You will try to throw it upon your father, then!" cried Ned, scornfully. "Both of you shall suffer for it. Gentlemen, you are witnesses. We must take this fellow back to Ralston. Justice must be done!"

"That's right, Ned!" said the hunters. "We held onto him."

"There is one thing you can do," said Ned, scathingly to Percival, "tell me the truth. Did Alice May go down to Danbury on the morning train, and is Smith's Bridge down?"

"No, no!" chattered the young snob. "That was father's game!"

"Keep an eye on him, boys," said Ned. "Now, what shall we do about poor Jim? Is there no hope?"

"No," replied Ike; "he is dead. I think the best thing we can do is to leave him here and take the hand-car and go back to Black Cut. Then we can telegraph for assistance."

"Yes, that is best," agreed Ned; "but, with sudden thought, "how about the misplaced rail? Other trains may come, in the meantime. It is on the loop and they could not stop."

"We must get to Black Cut in time to wire both Danbury and Ralston."

"I don't think it would do to risk that," decided Ned. "If only the section men were here, I'll tell you what; we will spike that rail down ourselves."

"If it isn't twisted—"

"It is not."

"Good!" declared Patterson. "Have we a heavy hammer?"

"Yes, in the locomotive cab."

This was brought. The ties were badly splintered, but the rails were intact. The

rail was replaced and spiked, and the fish-plates readjusted.

It had hardly been done when they were startled by a distant sound. It was a locomotive whistle.

"A special from Danbury!" cried Ned. "We'll try and signal them."

The roar of the approaching train was heard, and the moment it came into sight, coming down the loop at fearful speed, Ned sprang between the rails, waving his coat.

The engineer saw him and whistled. He could not stop his train, but as he passed, took in the situation and made a signal that he would stop at the top of the loop.

"Well," said Ned, with blanched face, "only think what would have happened if we had not replaced that rail."

All shivered, even Percival, who seemed thoroughly repentant.

It was easy enough now to decide what it was best to do.

The hand-car was placed on the rails. At the last moment Ned said:

"I can't bear to think of leaving poor Caldwell here. Let's put him on the car."

"All right," agreed the hunters.

So the maimed body of the stoker was lifted tenderly and placed on the hand-car. Then the party started up the long grade.

It was a hard three-mile pull.

But at the top of the grade was the special. There were but few passengers aboard, a theatrical troupe by whom the train was chartered. Caldwell's body was placed in the forward car and the train went on its way.

In due time the special ran into the depot at Ralston. But few people were in the station.

Ned's first move was to turn Jack Percival over to the police. Patterson and McClurey went down to police headquarters to give their testimony and make their charge.

Ned, with an officer, rushed into the office of the railroad magnate. He was not there.

Later officers went to his house, and the city was scoured, but no trace of him could be found.

The wily old wretch had fled. What would be the result only time could tell.

But the brand of Cain was on his brow forever. That day's act had sealed the fate of the magnate of Ralston.

Like wildfire the news spread.

The people of Ralston, long suffering, now rose in virtuous indignation. The streets were crowded with angry people.

If Luke Percival could have been found it would be easy to foretell the result. Lynch law is yet at times popular in the distant cities of the West.

CHAPTER XX.

A TALK WITH LEARNED COUNSEL.

But Percival could not be found. Not so much attention was paid to Jack, who languished in the town jail, for he was deemed only his father's son.

It is hardly necessary to say that Ned came in for congratulations on all sides. When he went home he was thrilled to see the carriage of the Mays at the door.

He knew well enough what this meant.

He rushed into the house only to be met by Alice, who sprang into his arms. Her joy knew no bounds.

"Oh, Ned!" she cried. "I'll never allow you to go on a locomotive again. Oh, what if you had been killed—"

"But I was not, my dear," said Ned, gaily. "Heaven spared me."

"And my prayers are answered," said Mrs. Woods devoutly. "The mercy of God knows no bounds. But see here, sis, don't you carry on so with him. He's nigh beat out, and you must let him eat his supper. It's all ready for ye, Ned; an' there's nothing like a full stomach, whether ye're in trouble or in love."

"You dear old soul!" cried Ned, gaily, "don't you see I'm out of the last and up to my neck in the other? Come, Alice, you must sample mother's good cooking. It is to her I owe all that I am."

"I cannot refuse," cried Alice, joyfully. "I know she is the empress of cooks."

"And my prayers are answered," said Ned, gaily.

"The mercy of God knows no bounds. But see here, sis, don't you carry on so with him. He's nigh beat out, and you must let him eat his supper. It's all ready for ye, Ned; an' there's nothing like a full stomach, whether ye're in trouble or in love."

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"Wait till the railroad is done."

"Drive on, James; he is too provoking!"

The driver snapped his whip. The last Ned saw of her she was saucily smiling back at him from the depths of the carriage. Then he went back into the house, his veins tingling as with an electric current.

The house was besieged that night with callers.

There were sympathetic friends, curiosity seekers and reporters. But finally Ned barred the door and went to sleep.

The next day the last rail of the Lake City road was laid. Before night the first train made its trip over the line.

It would, of course, require weeks to get the trains systematized and regular traffic established.

But Ned hung out a sign offering positions to all old employees of the D. & R. who had suffered by the strike.

This proved a popular move. Business in Ralston began to boom.

Mr. May returned and was shocked to hear of the events of the past few days.

"That is Percival's death-knell," he declared.

"He will hang for that; at least, it is manslaughter. What a fool he was!"

"Where can he have gone?" asked Ned.

"Oh, he has fled into the mountains somewhere, but he cannot go so far that he will not be overtaken."

"But the D. & R.? Not a train is moving on that line. All Percival's affairs are in the hands of his lawyers."

"It looks to me as if Ralston's dark hour is over."

"Yes."

"I don't see anything for Percival to do but to sell his road."

"By Jove! That is the idea! I will buy it if I can get the stock at par."

"It would be a great investment. With that and the Lake City you will be the railroad magnate of this part of the West, Ned."

"I do not aspire to that, but I want to see Ralston boom."

"You are already deemed a public benefactor."

"Let us go over and see his lawyers. If I am right, they are Ramsay and Morris."

"Yes."

No time was lost. Ned and Mr. May went over to see the lawyers. The firm of Ramsay & Morris were prominent in the legal world.

The two visitors were warmly received.

They were shown into a private office.

It was quite a rise for the boy engineer of nineteen years to be thus able to meet in counsel men of wealth and vast business experience, and be assured that his opinions would be listened to with respect and deference.

"Yes," said Mr. Ramsay, the astute man of law, "Mr. Percival's interests are wholly in our hands. We represent him in everything."

"Civil or criminal?" said Mr. May.

"We beg to differ with you. There is no criminal case against our client."

"Indeed!" said May. "What do you call it, then, to conspire to send a couple of men out on a mission of death and accomplish the death of one?"

"It has not been proved that this was done."

"Pshaw! what caused the death of poor Jim Caldwell?"

"Who shall say it was not an accident?"

"Witnesses saw young Percival in the act of wrecking that locomotive."

"Ah! but that does not convict Luke Percival. The act of his son does not affect him in a guilty way, even if that is proved."

"It is known that Percival furnished the engine and personally sent these men off on their errand of death. There was no disaster at Smith's Bridge. It was all a concocted scheme to put Ned Nerve out of the world," declared Mr. May, heatedly.

"We can disprove all that so far as Mr. Percival is concerned. We shall show that he was as unaware of the true state of affairs at Smith's Bridge as Ned Nerve. The case against Mr. Percival would then be quashed."

Ned and Mr. May looked at each other after this logical reasoning of the smart lawyer. Then Mr. May asked:

"Will Percival give himself up?"

"That has not yet been decided."

"In any event," said Ned, "it will be policy for Mr. Percival to sell his railroad."

"We have so advised him."

"What is his price?"

"I think it can be bought at a fair figure. I will ascertain."

"Then you are in communication with Mr. Percival?"

"I have not said so," said the lawyer, carefully.

"In any case," said Ned, "I am prepared to offer par value for the stock held by Luke Percival."

"In cash?"

"Yes."

The lawyer stared at Ned. He made a brief calculation with a pencil.

"That means about half a million," he said. "That is a large sum."

"All right; I'll furnish it."

"Mr. Nerve," said Mr. Ramsay, "you are the sensation of the hour. Many people are curious to know where you have found such wealthy backers."

"Well, they can remain curious," declared Ned.

"You may be sure the people of this town take

Ned. "I will, however, enlighten them to this degree: I am my own backer."

The lawyer looked at Mr. May. Even Ned's good friend seemed unable to grasp the realization.

"Well," said the lawyer, briskly, "I will have an answer ere long, and will at once transmit it to you."

Then Ned and Mr. May took their departure. It was a new era in Ned's career.

CHAPTER XXI.

AT THE BANQUET.

"He is a very shrewd fellow," said Mr. May. "I could not trip him up on the whereabouts of Percival."

"No," laughed Ned. "I am afraid I would make a poor lawyer."

"I once had a friend who declared that an honest lawyer could not be successful."

"It seems strange that representatives of justice should be compelled to employ subterfuge and unworthy tricks."

"Law is not justice, Ned."

"But we look to the law for justice."

"Justice is blind. But the law is about as wide awake an individual as I ever met. However, I believe you'll get the railroad, Ned."

"Well, I think so, too."

"Let us go over to the Merchants' Club. I believe there is a meeting to-day."

"I am not a member."

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pleasure in showing their gratitude for what you have done for them."

"For what I have done for them?" exclaimed Ned.

"Yes. Oh, you are too modest by half! What would have become of us but for you? We were literally at the mercy of Percival. He would have ruined the town. You stepped in and saved the day."

Ned was overwhelmed with the honors of the day. He was toasted again and again. And so modestly did he receive these honors that his popularity was undimmed.

It was late in the evening before the banquet was over.

And then it was broken up by a sudden startling message. It was brought by one of the clerks at the Lake City R. R. office and given to Ned.

As the young railroad builder read it he gave a cry of dismay. Thus it read:

"Bandits have fired the Devil's Run trestle and it is threatened with destruction. Assistance is needed at once."

The message was signed by the telegraph operator at Devil's Run. The great trestle there, over a gorge eighty feet deep, had cost an immense sum to build.

It's destruction would hold up traffic at the Lake City road for a good while. Ned handed the message to Mr. May.

"My soul!" gasped the magnate. "That is the work of Luke Percival. I'll wager my life on that. It is his revenge!"

Ned's eyes flashed. He said:

"I shall have to be excused. Will you give the message to the chairman to be read to the club? I shall need armed men and a relief train must be sent at once."

Mr. May himself read the message aloud. It created tremendous excitement.

There were volunteers even among the merchants. But word was sent to the chief of the vigilants.

Within half an hour a hundred armed men were at the depot of the Lake City road. An engine and three cars were brought from the yard.

Ned hastily buckled on a belt with revolvers. Just then a train dispatcher came along the platform.

"Carter, the driver of this engine, is sick," he said. "Shall I take an extra engineer or one of the regulars?"

Ned instantly replied:

"Neither! I will take the train down there myself!"

"And I'll go with you!" cried Mr. May, "with your permission."

"Certainly!"

The two leaped into the cab and Ned pulled the bell rope.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

"Pluck and Luck" can give you any kind of story you like.

A BORN FIREMAN

(Continued from page 8.)

Tom made other remarks about the foreman of No. 3, all of which the reporter took great pleasure in writing down.

"Well, don't be hard on him, Whaley," said the reporter. "He was doing his best."

"Yes, he was; but, great Scott! I'd as soon think of trusting a three-year-old child with his father's razor as that fellow with a nozzle at a fire. The young lady and myself would have been very badly hurt, probably one or both of us killed, if two of our boys hadn't broken our fall."

CHAPTER XI.

THE VISITORS TO NO. 2

Tom had saved two other young ladies besides Miss Livingston, and the next evening after the fire Mr. Livingston came to the headquarters of No. 2 and asked if Mr. Whaley was in.

"Yes, sir," said Jack Crowell. "Here he is."

Now, Tom did not know Mr. Livingston, even by sight, so he rose to his feet and looked him in the face as he approached.

Being a stranger, he suspected he must be some friend of Morris, with whom he had had a fight.

The man extended his hand as he approached, saying:

"I am Mr. Livingston, and I have come to thank you in the name of my wife and daughter."

"Ah, I am glad to see you, Mr. Livingston," and Tom grasped his hand and shook it warmly.

"Thank you. We feel under very great obligations to you and your brave boys."

By that time all the members of the company present crowded around as soon as they heard the name of Livingston.

Some of them, though, knew him by sight, and a general hand-shaking followed.

"How is Miss Livingston?" Tom asked.

"She is suffering a good deal from the shock of the fire and the fall," was the reply; "but otherwise she is uninjured."

"Well, how is Arthur?"

Livingston looked at him, and there was a grim smile on his face as he said:

"Really, I can't say. I think it'll take

him a good while to recover. His sister has been berating him all day long, and if she was anybody else but his sister I actually believe he would kill her."

The young firemen roared with laughter.

"Well, I give him credit for good intentions, Mr. Livingston," said Tom; "but I guess he doesn't know anything about the force of water. We have a strong head of water here at Greystone; at a distance of twenty feet it would kill a man if turned on him and held steadily for three minutes. I don't know how far away he was when that water struck me, but it nearly blew my head off. It blew us from the ladder; but I managed to keep Miss Livingston from being hurt by the fall. At the next fire I will be willing to pay something if they'll keep him away."

"Well, let me ask you boys to be lenient with him. He feels very badly over the mistake he made."

"He ought to be, for it seems to me that any ten-year-old-boy would have had sense enough to turn the stream straight up and let the water fall in a shower all over us if he wanted to protect us from the flames, instead of giving it to us direct, and knocking us off the ladder."

"He was greatly excited, no doubt."

"Oh, yes; I'll forgive him if he won't do so any more."

"Well, I want to say to you boys that you may look upon me from this time forth as one of your warmest friends, and I mean just what I say. I own a good deal of property in this town, and all property owners look to the fireman for protection, both for life and property, and if, at any time, any of you need any assistance that I can render don't hesitate to come to me frankly and let me know what it is."

"Thank you," said Tom. "We are satisfied with the approval of the good citizens of Greystone, and ask for nothing but simply fair treatment."

"Mr. Livingston, will you let me make a suggestion?" Tom asked.

"Certainly, certainly, my boy."

"Well, it is this: Use all your influence with the city council to add another engine to the fire department of this city. About ninety per cent. of the residences here are frame buildings, and more than one-half of the business houses, also. If a fire should break out when a high wind is blowing our department wouldn't be able to cope with it."

Mr. Livingston looked at him in silence for a minute or two, and then remarked:

"I'll do it, my boy. I never thought of it before, but I can see now that you are right."

"I'm satisfied of it, sir. I spoke to the mayor about it, and he agrees with me; but he said that there were a lot of taxpayers who would kick on the expense. We are certainly in a very great danger with only two fire engines."

"Oh, you have three!"

"Oh! Do you count the other one?" Tom asked, with a smile.

The boys laughed, and Livingston had to join them.

He entered his carriage, after shaking hands with the boys again, and drove away. He went to the headquarters of No. 1, and there thanked the foremen and men.

There he met Mr. Swanson, who had come for the same purpose.

He had scarcely left the building when another carriage drove up, and a gentleman alighted, accompanied by a lady and two young girls about eighteen years of age.

As they came into the engine house the boys removed their hats.

"Say, Tom, those two young ladies are the ones you brought out of the burning building first last night," one of the firemen whispered to the foreman.

"Gentlemen," said the elderly man, who accompanied the ladies, "my name is Nugent, and this is my wife. This is my daughter, and this young lady is Miss Caldwell. Your foreman last night brought the two young ladies safely down from an upper story in Swanson's house, and thus saved them from a horrible death. They have come down to thank you."

One of the girls looked Tom straight in the face, and said:

"You are Mr. Whaley. I know you," and she walked straight up to him and extended her hand to him. He grasped it, and, to the astonishment of all the fire boys, pressed it to his lips.

The girl looked as though she would like to throw her arms around his neck and kiss him, but as there were so many present she hesitated.

Miss Nugent rushed up and caught his hand in both hers, and exclaimed:

"Mr. Whaley, I owe you my life, and I assure you that as long as I live I shall be grateful."

The next moment Mrs. Nugent was shaking hands with him, too, and pouring out a torrent of grateful expressions to him.

"Now, ladies," said Tom, "I don't deserve one particle more credit than these other fellows do. Every man in a fire company has his post, and these brave fellows stuck to their posts like old veterans. There isn't one of them who would not have gone up the ladder just as I did; but the foreman, you know, is here, there and everywhere, and sometimes he hasn't a man to spare to

send up the ladder. If I order one of them to go on the roof, even when it is about to cave in, he won't hesitate to go, for they run to a fire to save life and property. Tom Whaley doesn't deserve any more credit than they do."

"Oh, I feel grateful to every one of you," said Mrs. Nugent, turning and extending her hand to the nearest fireman, and the girls followed her example.

"I feel grateful to every one of you," said Miss Caldwell; "but it is impossible for me to forget that it was Mr. Whaley who brought me out of the fire."

"That's right," said one of the older members. "And Tom is just the boy to snatch a girl up in his arms, fire or no fire."

The firemen chuckled, the young lady smiled, turned, looked at Tom, and then said:

"I am sure I'm glad you like girls well enough to be willing to go into a fire after them."

"I'm willing to do that every time," he laughed. "I have two sisters at home, who are as good girls as ever breathed, and that's why I'm very fond of other girls."

Mr. Nugent, of course, like Mr. Livingston, gave vent to many expressions of friendship and gratitude. He stated that the boys of No. 2 could all count upon him as a friend to be relied upon whenever they needed a friend.

CHAPTER XII.

TOM DEFENDS HIS LIFE.

There were accounts of the visits at the fire company headquarters in the paper the next morning, and the young firemen as they read the reports were very highly gratified; but all of them being workingmen they were at their various places of employment, rarely meeting each other except of evenings.

When Tom went home to his noonday meal his mother met him with a happy smile on her face, saying:

"Tom, you can't guess who has been here this morning."

"I don't suppose I can, mother, for I never was good at guessing."

"Well, Ethel Livingston came and spent an hour with me, and she is really one of the sweetest girls I ever met, and she wants to see you. She actually made me blush at what she said about you. She says that you are as strong as Samson, and that as soon as she felt your arm around her waist she knew she would be saved. She remembers everything, though she was awfully excited, but that you spoke kindly to her, told her to keep quiet and you would get her out safely, but for the life of her she couldn't keep still."

"That's right; she didn't keep still till her brother struck her with that stream of water, and it was enough to keep a girl still."

"Oh, but you ought to hear how she does roast him," said his mother. "She says he is about as well fitted to be a fireman as he is to be a monk, and actually remarked that there isn't a single member of No. 3 as good a fireman as the poorest of either of the other two."

"Surely she didn't say that, mother?"

"Yes, she did. She says that society men don't develop their muscles, and accustom themselves to dangers; that they have no business trying to be firemen; and then she repeated what so many have been saying, that you are a born fireman, and utterly fearless. I really do believe that had you come in while she was here she would have thrown her arms around your neck and kissed you."

"Great Scott!" he laughed. "Is she coming back again?"

"Yes; she's going to come here to-morrow to take lunch with us, for the purpose of meeting you. She is a very independent sort of a girl, so you must be sure to wash up at the shop before you come home."

"All right; I will," he laughed; "but what did she say about what was in the paper this morning? It was very hard on her brother, you know."

"Why, she just laughed at it," said that it was every word true, that is nearly killed her brother, but that she was glad of it. She said she'd been telling him all along that he wasn't cut out for a fireman; that he was pretty good on a parade, but was afraid of fire."

"She's got him down right," said Tom, who hurried through the meal and returned to his work.

On his way to the shop Tom met Jennie Cosgrove and her cousin, Miss Griswold.

They both ran up to him, and shook his hand.

"Oh, Mr. Whaley," said Jennie, "I see you've been saving the lives of other girls."

"Yes," he laughed. "Little girls will get into fires, and some one has to pull them out."

"Well, you didn't have to pull me out; I jumped out."

"Yes, so you did; but you were so frightened you didn't seem to care where you fell."

"Oh, I knew there were some young men down below there who would catch me."

"Sensible," he laughed. "It isn't every young lady that will admit that she jumped at a young man with the expectation of being caught in his arms."

"Oh, that's cruel," she said; "but I don't care; I'll admit I'd rather jump into a young man's arms than into a fire."

"That's right; and, by the way, Miss Jennie, there's a member in our company who is very anxious to make your acquaintance, and he's a good fellow, too; he earns three dollars a day, and he's old enough to marry, for he's twenty-two."

"Oh, my! Bring him around to see me. My cousin Cora here will be ever so glad to entertain him."

"Oh, ho! I don't think that would exactly suit him. He wants you to entertain him, and I'll entertain Miss Cora myself."

Being in a hurry to get back at his work, he soon excused himself and left the two girls.

Before he reached the shop Tom came up face to face with Morris, the incendiary.

"Say, Tom," growled the fellow, "what's the matter with our having it out right here?"

"Morris, what have you got against me?"

Tom asked.

"You accused me of firing the Bell & Wood shop."

"I've done nothing of the sort."

"I understand that you did. You told the mayor that the fire was of incendiary origin, and that you'd seen me run out of the old building and leave an oil can behind."

"I simply gave him the evidence I found, but I made no charge against you. I don't mind telling you, though, to your face, that I do believe you started that fire."

The man hissed out an oath and started toward him.

Tom knew that those thick, broad shoulders meant great brute strength, so he sprang back, drew his knife, and said:

"Morris, I'll kill you if you attack me. You are a stronger man than I am, and I know that you'd like to get me out of the way, but I'm not going to let you do it."

"Only a coward would use a knife," hissed Morris.

"That's all right; but let me tell you that it is my intention to kill you if you stand on me now or any other time, so you'd better put that in your pipe and smoke it."

There was nobody in sight on the street at that particular time.

So Morris picked up a stone nearly the size of a coconut. Tom saw his peril. He knew that if the stone hit him he was a goner.

"You'd better drop that, Morris," he said to him. "I don't want to be killed, nor do I want to kill you."

"Then you drop that knife."

"No, I won't. It's my knife that I carry with me all the time. I've no desire to do you any harm."

Morris drew back to hurl the stone at him. It seemed that his right foot stepped on a round stone the size of a large marble, and as he made the effort to throw his foot slipped and he fell.

Quick as a flash Tom sprang at him, snatched the stone up, which had fallen to the ground, and smashed him in the face with it.

It was an awful crash, and the man lay there unconscious.

Tom looked at him, and then gazed up and down the street to see if he could get sight of an officer, or some one whom he could send for the police.

Across the street was a little cottage where lived a workingman.

The front door opened, and an elderly couple stepped out.

"Young man, we saw that, and we will be witnesses for you. You did just right," said the man.

"Thank you! Thank you!" he replied.

"Will you watch him till I can go to the police station. I fear he's pretty badly hurt."

Tom knew the old man by sight, and he and his wife knew him, so he hurried off, and two blocks away met an officer and told him what had happened.

"All right; I'll go with you," and he returned to the place accompanied by the officer.

There they found Morris sitting up in a dazed condition, bleeding profusely, his nose and mouth badly crushed.

The officer knew Tom well. The old working man in the cottage near by came out and told the officer that he and his wife were witnesses of the meeting, and that Tom acted solely in self-defense.

The officer took his name and address, sent for an ambulance, and had Morris conveyed to the police station, whence he was sent to the hospital.

The incident created a good deal of excitement in Greystone, and the firemen of Nos. 1 and 2 that evening at their respective headquarters told Tom they would stand by him to a man.

The authorities didn't arrest Tom, for they were convinced from what the old man and his wife stated that he had acted solely in self-defense.

The physicians were doubtful about Morris' recovery from his injuries, for it was a heavy stone, which had been taken to the police station by the arresting officer,

and it had smashed in the nose and the upper teeth, making an exceedingly ghastly wound.

That evening a heavy threatening storm cloud hovered over the city.

Tom stood out on the little porch of his mother's cottage, and debated with himself as to whether or not he should go to the engine house, as was his usual custom every evening.

Heavy peals of thunder shook the earth every few minutes, and vivid flashes of lightning followed in rapid succession.

Suddenly there was a keen crack of thunder and lightning combined, and Tom said to himself:

"There! That struck somewhere."

Just a few minutes later he heard the fire alarm, and it struck for the second district.

He bounded off the porch and ran in that direction.

Before he reached there he heard an explosion that seemed to shake the city, and there was a great flash of light that seemed to illumine the whole heavens. It was in the center of a business block, and lightning had struck a large store which dealt in paints and oils.

"Great Scott!" he exclaimed, when he had located the fire. "The whole block is doomed if the threatening storm should raise a wind."

CHAPTER XIII.

OIL AND WATER.

Nos. 1 and 2 reached the fire about the same time. It was evident that it had been started by the lightning, which was still playing furiously, while peals of thunder fairly shook the earth.

"Boys," sang out the young foreman, "nobody lives in this building, but it is full of explosive material. There are no lives to save except our own, but we must do our duty. Let no one enter the building, but throw the streams through the windows."

It was a three story building, and three floors were stored with inflammable material.

No. 3 came up and quickly threw a stream, bursting in the windows of the third story.

Tom Whaley attempted to give them no orders, and it was evident that they were doing the best they could by imitating the nozzlemen of Nos. 1 and 2.

Suddenly there came a tremendous explosion; almost the entire roof of the building was sent flying high in the air, and millions of sparks went with it.

"Look out! Look out!" sang out the foremen of Nos. 1 and 2. The firemen, however, stood to their posts and showers of broken timber fell all around them.

There were very few spectators there on account of the fierce lightning, loud peals of thunder and the momentary expectation of a great downpour of rain.

One member of No. 1 was struck on the head by a piece of timber and dropped to the ground like one dead.

Quick as a flash the foreman sang out to the policeman:

"Summon an ambulance for that man!"

The policeman at once picked him up and bore him away from the scene.

It was a magnificent spectacle—the great volume of smoke and flame that followed the explosion.

Of course, a great deal of the debris fell upon the roofs of the adjoining buildings. Some were burning and others were not. It was a brick building, and so were all the others in the block.

The mayor rushed up to Tom Whaley and asked:

"Do you think you can manage it, Tom?"

"I don't know, sir. There's no wind blowing yet, and I hope that the storm won't bring any with it. It would be a Godsend, though, if the rain would come quickly!" and the next moment he yelled through the trumpet:

"Throw water on the adjoining roofs!"

The nozzlemen of Nos. 1 and 2 obeyed the order. The streams were sent up high in the air and fell in showers on the roof, while the flames, confined in the brick walls, shot up as though out of a great furnace.

The next moment another explosion occurred and burning material was sent up in a great shower; much broken glass rattled on the street around the firemen, and again one of the men was hurt, a piece of glass having split his cheek.

Tom rushed to him and saw the blood streaming down over his uniform.

"Go to the hospital, Joe," he said to him. "That's a bad cut."

He belonged to No. 2.

Joe went staggering away, and reached the ambulance while they were putting the other man into it.

It was then driven off rapidly toward the hospital.

"Boys, look out!" he called to them. "There will probably be other explosions, and you want to look out for the front wall there. It may come down at the next explosion."

The nozzlemen of Nos. 1 and 2 held their ground, throwing their streams on the adjoining buildings; but No. 3 kept pouring their stream upon the flames.

Of course, the foremen of Nos. 1 and 2 said nothing to them.

The mayor, however, rushed up to Arthur Livingston, the foreman, and asked him why he didn't throw water on the buildings adjoining, for the purpose of saving them, as there was no chance whatever to manage the fire.

Livingston had the good sense to issue the order, and two streams were poured upon the building on the right, while No. 1 looked after that on the left.

Then followed other explosions, some small ones and others of greater proportions; but each time showers of sparks and burning timbers went up. There was absolutely nothing saved from the building.

No attempt to save anything was made. All the time thunder was shaking the earth and vivid flashes of lightning followed in rapid succession.

Suddenly there was a keen crack of thunder and lightning combined, and Tom said to himself:

"There! That struck somewhere."

Just a few minutes later he heard the fire alarm, and it struck for the second district.

He bounded off the porch and ran in that direction.

Before he reached there he heard an explosion that seemed to shake the city, and there was a great flash of light that seemed to illumine the whole heavens. It was in the center of a business block, and lightning had struck a large store which dealt in paints and oils.

"Great Scott!" he exclaimed, when he had located the fire. "The whole block is doomed if the threatening storm should raise a wind."

Young Livingston was puzzled. He rushed up to Tom and yelled at him:

"Why the deuce don't you keep your stream going? What's the matter?"

"Say, Livingston, don't you know that that cellar has many hundreds of gallons of oil in it?"

"Yes, of course I do; and it will burn up the whole town if we don't put it out. I'll report you to the council if you don't play on it!"

CHAPTER XIV.

A HARD FIGHT WITH THE FLAMES.

Young Livingston was very much excited and threatened to report the foreman of No. 2 to the City Council if he didn't at once resume throwing his stream into the vortex of flame.

"You can report and be hanged!" retorted Tom. "If we fill that cellar with water the oil, which floats on top, will overflow, run into the gutters and set the whole town afire!"

"Well, what are we to do, then?" Livingston asked, the truth suddenly flashing upon him that young Whaley was right.

"Simply watch it and see that it doesn't catch to the other buildings. The storm is doing the work for us."

The next moment he yelled at his nozzleman to cease throwing the stream on the fire.

"Where shall I throw it, then?" the nozzleman asked.

"Hold it for further orders," was the reply.

The nozzleman was utterly astounded, and as there was but little discipline among aristocratic volunteer firemen, a number of them rushed up to him and eagerly inquired what he meant by ceasing to throw the water on the fire.

"Why, there are hundreds of gallons of oil in the cellar there, and as it floats on water the burning oil will get out into the gutters if we fill the cellar so that it overflows."

"Who told you that?" one asked.

Livingston was not manly enough to give Tom the credit for it, so he replied:

"It wasn't necessary for anybody to tell me. Everybody knows that oil floats on water."

"Well, how do you know that there is not an outlet from the cellar for the water to escape?"

"There may be, but we don't know it."

"Well, you will want to find out, then."

"You get back to your place and do your duty!" retorted Livingston, with considerable spirit.

All the time the rain was coming down in torrents. The wind had died away, but the oil, being heated almost to a boiling point, kept burning fiercely.

The double, brick walls on either side held it in bound, but the heat was intense.

Tom sent a man up on the roof of the building on the left, but no member of No. 3 would attend to the one on the right. Just as Tom was about to send one over on that side he saw a member from No. 1 up there looking out for danger.

"Tom," said the mayor, who had remained during the storm, "this is a terrible situation. Do you think you can manage it?"

"Yes, sir. I think we've got it under control now, but it is impossible to put out that fire with water. All we can do is to let the oil burn itself out and trust to those double, brick walls and our watchfulness to prevent the other roofs from catching fire."

"Do you mean to say that the pouring of water on that fire won't extinguish it?" the mayor asked.

"Certainly I do. There are several hundred gallons of oil there, and it is very hot. The flames are eating it up very fast, however. Oil floats on water, you know, and if we fill the cellar it will overflow into the streets."

"You are right, my boy. You are a genius—a born fireman."

"Thank you, but we are indebted to the cloud overhead for saving this block from utter destruction. It was an unusually heavy rainfall, and it extinguished the sparks and pieces of burning timber as fast as they fell on the roofs. But for that rain a half dozen fire engines couldn't have saved the block."

"I believe you, but what are you going to do now?"

"Simply watch it and see that it doesn't spread; but men ought to go inside of the stores on the right and left, examine the walls and watch the effect of the heat. There may be inflammable articles against the walls that ought to be removed."

The owners of the buildings had not even dared go inside for fear that an explosion would send the walls crashing down upon them.

They were present, though, notwithstanding the rain storm, and the mayor went to them, told them what Tom had suggested, and they at once made inquiry if there was any danger of more explosions.

"None whatever," said Tom, "unless there are barrels of oil floating about in the cellar. If so, they will explode after a while, but as the space is all open above them the force will go upward instead of

sideways. It will only scatter burning oil and add more fuel to the flames."

"I won't risk it," said the owner of the store on the right.

"Open the door for me, then," said Tom, "and I'll send some of my men in there."

The storekeeper very promptly opened his front door and Tom, with his assistant foreman, rushed in, and, greatly to his surprise, found that the walls were scarcely warm on that side.

"Well, I'll tell you about this wall," said the storekeeper; "there are two walls, one for each store, each a foot thick, so there are two feet of solid brick wall between us and the flames."

"That's all right," said Tom; "but before the oil is all consumed this wall will be pretty hot, and if you know of any inflammable material close to the wall on this side I want to have it removed."

"There is nothing but dry goods and shoes against the wall here, I believe. Of course, there is a good deal of paper, such as paper boxes, against it."

"Then we'd better have the shelves pulled down."

"But who is to do it?" the storekeeper asked.

"I'll settle that question," said Tom, and he immediately ordered the members of No. 2 to get to work. They used the hooks belonging to the company, and in a few moments there was a great crash, for the shelves were pulled over without any ceremony. And soon there was a cleared space of several feet by the wall.

Showcases were smashed, but as no water was used there was practically little damage done except to the shelving.

"Now let's see about the other side!" and Tom led the way to the building on the opposite side of the fire.

The doors were locked and the owner was nowhere about.

That, too, was a dry goods store.

"Who has the key to this door?" Tom asked.

Of course, nobody knew.

"Come, boys, let's burst it in!" and four of the stalwart fellows hurled themselves against the heavy oaken door; it gave way against their united strength. In a few minutes the shelving was pulled down and cotton and silks were piled on the floor.

The wall in there was somewhat warmer than the one in the other building was.

"Now, Mr. Mayor," said Tom, "place a policeman in front of each store, with orders to permit no one to enter except the owners." Tom suggested, "and we will watch the fire."

By that time the rain had dwindled down to a slight drizzle, but the flames between the brick walls burned with the fierceness of an iron moulder's furnace, yet nowhere did it reach above the top of the walls, which were three stories high.

Suddenly a barrel of oil, floating around, exploded, and a great flame shot upward almost to the top of the walls, scattering burning oil over many of the firemen out in the street. Some of them were burned, but as it fell in drops it was quickly extinguished. Their wet shirts failed to catch afame.

It only added more fuel in the shape of oil.

By midnight it was still burning, but the heroic firemen were watching every point of danger with the faithfulness of so many watchdogs. All night long they toiled and watched.

The clouds cleared away and the stars came out, but there were no more sparks to fly.

One more barrel of oil exploded, sending a shower of the blazing fluid out into the street and on the walls on either side.

Of course, when it struck the almost red-hot brick walls it flamed up as quickly as though it was powder, but it burned out as quickly, and so the fight went on all through the night until dawn. Then people began assembling again, coming from every direction.

CHAPTER XV.

HOW TOM MET ETHEL LIVINGSTON.

The members of No. 3 remained by their engine, tired and sleepy, but not daring to leave the post of danger; but they momentarily abandoned their position when the first floating barrel of oil exploded. Some of them got a few drops of the burning oil on them, and a panic ensued; but seeing the members of No. 2 standing to their post they gathered courage and quickly returned. They had little to do as they were on watch to prevent the other buildings catching fire.

They were drenched to the skin, however, and, taken all in all, they were a very bedraggled lot.

Young Livingston, however, walked about to keep awake and regain his lost prestige.

The mayor went up to him and remarked:

"Livingston, your men are doing finely. They are standing to their posts like heroes."

"Thank you, Mr. Mayor. We are here to do our duty, and we don't intend to leave our post as long as there is any danger threatening."

"That's right, that's right! It is a hard fire to fight. The trouble is that water doesn't have much effect on burning oil. You can't smother it because there is nothing to smother it with."

"Yes, I know that, but what is to be done?"

"Well, Whaley says we've got to let the oil burn itself out, and there's no telling how long that will take. I'm inclined to think, though, that it won't require many hours to consume it, because it has a broad surface exposed to the flames and that eats it up very fast."

"Say, Mr. Mayor," called out one of the men, "how is it that no coffee has been sent to us? We have been working here all night."

"Never thought of it, my boy. I'll see to it at once!" and his honor hurried away to a restaurant in the next block, which had not yet been opened as it was then about dawn.

He sent a messenger to the proprietor to hurry to his place of business and make several gallons of coffee for the firemen.

The proprietor came quickly; gathered up his cooks and at once proceeded to make the coffee.

A half hour later the waiters came with steaming coffee and a basketful of cups and saucers.

Never were firemen so hungry for such a treat. The coffee was made strong, and the men took it without sugar. Some of them took two and three cups.

The mayor then sent orders to the restaurant to prepare breakfast for the men, and that he would be responsible for the bill.

An hour later the firemen were informed that they could have breakfast at the restaurant.

"Well, we can't leave this fire," said Tom, "but each company can spare about half its force to go and get their breakfast, and on their return the other half can go;" and that was the way it was managed.

It was not until nearly noon that the fire expended itself. The last drop of oil was consumed and about three feet depth of hot water was left in the cellar.

Then the firemen returned to their headquarters, tired, drenched to the skin and very sleepy.

Instead of going to his company's headquarters, Tom Whaley made a break for home.

He wanted to exchange his wet clothes for dry ones, and then sleep the rest of the day. His face and hands were almost black from the smoke of burning oil, and when he entered his mother's cottage he heard her exclaim:

"Why, Tom, you're a sight to look at!" Behind his mother stood a young lady, who inquired:

"Mrs. Whaley, is that your Tom?"

"Yes, that's my Tom." Behind him, she rushed at him, threw her arms around his neck and kissed him, actually getting some of the black on her lips.

He held her off at arm's length, looked her in the face and asked:

"Are you Miss Livingston?"

"Yes, I'm Ethel Livingston, the girl whose life you saved, and the girl who is not ashamed to show her gratitude and admiration."

"Well, you are as pretty as red shoes," he laughed; "and if you'll wait till I've washed my face and hands and put on some dry clothes, I'll show you how I appreciate a pretty girl."

She laughed and blushed, and Mrs. Whaley remarked:

"Miss Livingston, you've got some of that black on your face."

"I don't care for that!" she laughed. "I came here to see Tom Whaley and tell him how grateful I am, and that he is the noblest man in all the world!" and she placed her little hand in his blackened palm as she spoke.

"Miss Livingston," he remarked, "your brother Arthur has been fighting the fire with us all night long, and has behaved bravely."

"Oh, I'm so glad to hear that! But I know it's because you set him a good example."

"Oh, we all did our duty to the best of our ability!" and pressing her hand to his lips he dropped it and rushed to his room. He didn't reappear until a full half hour had passed.

When he came out he had washed up clean, and was dressed in a dry suit of clothes.

When Ethel Livingston saw him she rushed into his arms; threw hers around his neck, saying:

"Tom Whaley, I owe you my life! You are the only man I ever kissed, and I want to kiss you all over your brave face."

"Now hold on, my dear; let me do the kissing!" and he laughingly held her in his arms, kissing her several times on her lips, chin, face and forehead. Then he would hold her off at arm's length, look at her and say:

"How beautiful you are! You are the prettiest girl I ever met. I could love you as no other girl was ever loved."

"Then love me, love me! Give me your whole heart, Tom Whaley!" the impulsive girl responded. "It is such a heart as I've

always craved; that of a brave, true, noble man, who would risk his life for others."

Mrs. Whaley was considerably astonished at the girl's impulsiveness and the expressions she used, but altogether pleased.

When Tom let her go the girl threw her arms around his mother's neck and kissed her repeatedly.

"What a happy woman you ought to be as the mother of such a noble, brave man!" she exclaimed.

"She is one of the best mothers fellow ever had," put in Tom, who couldn't help but admire the beautiful girl for her candor and impulsiveness.

"Well, dinner is ready, Tom," said Mrs. Whaley. "I knew you would come home very hungry."

"They gave us breakfast at the restaurant, but I confess to having considerable appetite left, and it is all the better for having such pleasant company," and as he spoke he looked admiringly at Ethel Livingston, who seemed almost too happy to keep control of herself.

She seemed to be all in a tremor.

Susie had come in from school, but Ella had taken her lunch with her to the factory where she worked, so she was not present.

Susie greatly admired the aristocratic young lady, and during the meal could scarcely keep her eyes off her face.

Ethel sat alongside of Tom, quietly listening to his story of the battle with the burning oil all night long, and how one of the men was knocked senseless by one of the flying timbers, and how the piece of glass cut open the cheek of one of his company.

At times she shuddered, but was happy over the fact that he himself was not hurt.

The meal over, Tom and the young lady went into the sitting room, while his mother and Susie attended to clearing away the dishes.

"Tom," said Ethel as she sat by his side, "do you see that diamond on my finger, there?"

"Yes; but it is not as pretty as the hand is."

Without noticing the compliment she continued: "I'm going to have that put in a scarf pin, and I want you to wear it."

"Don't do that," he said. "It's not at all appropriate for a poor mechanic to wear a three or four hundred dollar diamond scarf pin. I would rather wear you in my heart."

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

Be sure and send us your Name and Address for our latest Catalogue. We send it free.

Old-Fashioned Advice.

A young fellow who is steady and careful in the main, does himself far more harm in remaining out till past the midnight hour than he ever imagines. It may be that he affects billiards, and remains at the game till a late hour night after night. Well, he gets to bed somewhere about one, we will say. And what does he feel like in the morning? Why, he rises sleepily, feeling tired and stiff in every limb, feels in an ill-humor, hurries his breakfast in order to get to the office in time, works languidly and without the slightest energy all day, feeling quite tired out by the afternoon, and then—why, he generally repeats at night his preceding evening's programme. It does not seem much, but a prolonged course of late hours and insufficient sleep is madness. There's a tremendous amount of truth in the old woman's saying that one hour's sleep before midnight is worth two afterwards, although the modern young man feels inclined to scoff at it. And it is easy to prove it. Let any young fellow who has given himself to late hours try getting to bed by eleven every night. I'll guarantee he will be surprised after a short period by the alacrity with which he springs from his bed in the morning, the way he enjoys his breakfast, and the energy and cheerfulness with which he can do his work. It is the best advice in the world to act on the suggestion to keep early hours.

A Fox's Revenge.

A gentleman out shooting one day came to a river, where he saw six geese beyond shot. He determined to wait for them to approach the shore. While sitting there he saw a fox come down to the shore and stand some time and observe the geese. At length he turned and went into the woods, and came out with a very large bunch of moss in his mouth. He then entered the water very silently, sank himself, and then, keeping the moss above the water, himself concealed, he floated among the geese. Suddenly one of them was drawn under the water, and the fox soon appeared on the shore with the goose on his back. He ascended the bank, and found a hole made by the tearing up of a tree. This hole he cleared, placed in it the goose, and covered it with great care, strewing leaves over it. The fox then left; and

while he was away the hunter unburied the goose, closed the hole, and resolved to wait the issue. In about an hour the fox returned with another fox in company. They went directly to the place where the goose had been buried, and threw out the earth. The goose could not be found. They stood regarding each other for some time, when suddenly the second fox attacked the other most furiously, as if offended by the trick of his friend. During the battle the hunter shot them both.

S. S. D.—You can procure such a book from any large dealer in photographers' supplies. If they do not keep such books in stock have them order a copy for you.

MATT P. SCHUMMER.—There is no premium on the Quebec penny of 1852. 2. The Canadian one-half cent Jubilee stamps of 1897 are catalogued at twenty-five cents, both used and unused.

A. R. SIMMONS.—There are training schools for the instruction of persons desiring to become actors, but the charges are high. You can attend such classes at any time except during the summer season. We cannot publish their address in this column. You can find their advertisements in any sporting and dramatic paper.

E. R.—We have no recipe for a liquid courtplaster. Try the following recipe for the manufacture of courtplaster: Dissolve one pint of French isinglass in one pint of warm water; add to this ten cents' worth of pure glycerine, and five cents' worth of tincture of arnica. Lay a piece of black or white silk on a board and paint it over with this mixture.

READING.—The only machine of that kind that we know of is the electrical X-Ray machine, which comes very expensive, 2. We think you have reference to a trick spy-glass, which, by an arrangement of small mirrors, you can apparently look through a board or piece of stone. They can be purchased quite cheap from dealers in trick and novelty goods.

X. Y. Z.—To manufacture cheap and reliable fire extinguishing liquid use the following: Common rock salt or Liverpool ground salt, carbonate of soda, muriatic acid. If for bottling add about five drops of liquid ammonia in each bottle. Do not fill the bottle too full; cork and seal each bottle. This will not freeze and should be kept in a cool place.

OLD STORMY.—He is from New York State. 2. Read "Work and Win" for further information regarding his whereabouts at present. 3. "Remember the Maine" began in No. 188; "Jack of All Trades" in No. 191; "A Paper of His Own" in No. 201. No stories commenced in the other numbers mentioned. 4. The following is what you want: "In Ebony Land," Nos. 204 to 210.

F. N.—The first story published in the Detective Library was "Old Stealthy, the Government Detective"; it will not be republished. 2. Frank James and two of the Younger boys are the only ones living that we know of. Frank James is in St. Louis, Mo.; he has been connected with a theatrical company. 3. The Dalton boys are dead. 4. The stories you inquire about are founded on facts.

FED.—The distance between New York and Albany is 142 miles; from Albany to Niagara Falls, 300 miles; from Philadelphia to Buffalo, 442 miles; from Providence to Buffalo, 610 miles, and from Albany to Providence, 190 miles. The above are railroad distances. You can find the distances between the principal cities in the United States on pages 105-110 of "Frank Tousey's Distance Tables." Sent postage free upon receipt of price.

BIG BEN II.—For the desired information regarding Borneo, write to Mr. Alexander Harkness, V.C., Savannah, Ga. He is the British consul at that port. 2. The International Copyright Law requires that to perfect the copyright the publication must be issued simultaneously in both England and the United States. We cannot publish the full text of the law in this column. You can get a printed copy by addressing the Librarian of Congress, Washington, D. C.

H. F. W.—Fire is composed of light and heavy carbureted hydrogen gases. Air is composed of oxygen and nitrogen. Smoke is a vapor that escapes from burning matter owing to lack of complete combustion. 2. We answer all reasonable questions sent us. 3. Can furnish this paper from No. 135 to date. Price 5 cents each. 4. Can furnish bound volumes from Vol. 8 to 14, at \$1.75 each, postage additional. 4. Horse-power means the power required to raise 33,000 pounds at the rate of one foot per minute. 6. The springs you ask about can be purchased from dealers of sporting and novelty goods.

RED JACKET AND LITTLE FAWN.—Silver three-cent pieces of 1867 are quoted at 25 cents. 2. June 2, 1891, fell on Tuesday; January 14, 1888, on Saturday; May 29, 1893, on Monday, and July 4, 1894, on Wednesday. 3. The ruler of China is Kuang Hsu; Germany, William II; Greece, King George. 4. The Governor of Texas is Joseph D. Sayers; Florida, Wm. S. Jennings; Michigan, Aaron T. Bliss, and Mississippi, A. H. Longino. 5. We do not know who Peter Sheridan is. 6. The Shamrock II is the larger boat as she was compelled to give time allowance. 7. Frank James is living; he is about fifty years of age. 8. He is not writing for this paper. Will answer the rest of your questions in our next issue.

(Several letters remain over to be answered next week.)

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